\ıʏ<ık :λ ı .
ı'.\(H .ı'ı'K)\

iathe Development and Vitality ofthe Church

Fr. John G Arintero, O.P
Translated by Fr. Jordan Aumann,O.P

THE MYSTICAL EVOLUTION

IN THE

DEVELOPMENT AND VITALITY

THE VERY REVEREND JOHN G. ARINTERO, O.P., S.T./V1

Translated by

FR. JORDAN AUMANN, O.P.

Dominican House of Studies
Rioer Forest, Illinois

6 tn t
s f.

VOLUME TWO

MARY IWMACUL4 E SEMINARY LIBRARY
300 RYVILLE ROAD
. BO
NORTHAMPTON, PA. 18067

TAN BOOKS AND PUBLISHERS, INC.
Rockford, Illinois 61105

NIHIL OBSTAT

Fr. Leonardus Callahan, O.P.

Fr. Guillehnus Curran, O.P.

IMPRIMI POTEST

Fr. Edwardus Leo Hughes, O.P.

Prior Provicialis

Chicago, HL, Dec. 29, 1949

NIHIL OBSTAT

Wm. Fischer, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum

IMPRIMATUR

^•*Joseph E. Ritter*

Archiepiscopus

Sti. Ludovici, die 28 Maii, 1951

Copyright® 1951 byB. Herder Book Co.

Copyright ® 1978 by Tan Books and Publishers, Inc.

Originally published in English by B. Herder Book Co.

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 78-62254

ISBN: The Set—0-89555-071-7. Volume 1-0-89555-072-5
Volume II — 0-89555-073-3

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

V

TAN BOOKS AND PUBLISHERS, INC.
P.O. Box 424
Rockford. Illinois 61105

1978

SSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSvSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsASSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSiSSsSSSsSSSs

PART II

THE MYSTICAL EVOLUTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	General Process of Renewal and Deification .	3
	Spiritual Renewal and Mortification	5
	Progressive Purification	16
	Appendix	22
	The Process of Illumination, Union, and Transformation	3i
	Appendix	45
II.	The Purgative Way	5°
	Purification and Mortification	5«
	Appendix	61
	Passive Purgation	63
	Terrible Crisis and Segregation	76
	Appendix	89
III.	The Dawn of Contemplation	95
	The Night of the Senses	95
	Further Trials and Contradictions	104
	Appendix	118
IV.	Advance in Illumination and Union - - - -	127
	The Prayer of Recollection	127
	The Prayer of Quiet	'3i
	Appendix	142
	The Prayer of Union	'47
	Appendix .	x 162
V.	The Deifying Transforming Union - - - -	170
	The Mystical Espousal	170
	Appendix - - - -	180

CONTENTS

CHAPTEK PAGE

The Night of the Spirit....184
Appendix....205
The Spiritual Marriage....219
Appendix....237

VI. Diversity of the Ways of the Spirit....252
The Grades of Contemplation....256
Phenomena Which AccompanyContemplation . . . 262
Appendix....275
Difference between These Phenomena and Natural Phenomena....289
Appendix....jot

VII. Visions and Locutions....3°4
Appendix....326

VIII. The Spirit of Revelation....334
The Supernatural Senses....334
Progressive Revelations....353
Appendix....369
Importance of Private Revelations....374

IX. Doctrinal Questions....383
The Desire for Contemplation and Mystical Union . . 384
Asceticism and Mysticism....403
The Mystical Question....421
Appendix....433

PART III

MYSTICAL EVOLUTION OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH

X. Integral Life and Collective Evolution....447
Vital Solidarity of the Christian Faithful....448
Organization and Diversity of Functions....457
Appendix....465

XI. Process of the Evolution of the Church....469
Causes of Progress and Retrogression....469
Correlation and Solidarity....475
Appendix....490
The Church as the Garden and Living Temple of God 491
Appendix....498
Growth in Sanctity....499

Index....511

Part Two

THE MYSTICAL EVOLUTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

CHAPTER I

General Process of Renewal and Deification

SSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSs5SSs5SSs5SSs5SSSSSSs5SSs5SSsSSSsSSSs5SSsSSs5SSs5SSs5SSssSSs5SSsSSsSSs5SSs5SSsSSs

have seen what constitutes the divine life of grace which our Lord Jesus Christ brought us from heaven. We have seen the loftiest operations of this life and the various means of increasing it in each member of the Savior and in the whole mystical body of His Church.

We now come to study, as far as is possible, the marvelous history of the deification of the *individual,* or rather, the process of the growth of the divine germ of grace in each Christian soul. If we know the amplitude of grace, we shall be able to augment it as we ought, endeavoring with all our strength ultimately to remove the obstacles which impede it or render its working difficult and taking care that in critical periods we do not fail through carelessness or weakness. Continually growing in charity, we shall be able to contribute efficaciously to the formation of the mystical body as a whole.

Now that we know the gift of God, we are obliged to desire Him wholeheartedly and to beg incessantly that it be given to us to drink of the mysterious living water [1] which irrigates and makes fruitful

[1] John 4:10: "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

ITey *of Perfection,* chaps. 19-21: "Why do you suppose, daughters, that I have tried, as people say, to describe the end of the battle before it has begun and to point to its reward by telling you about the blessing which comes from drinking of the heavenly source of this living water? I have done this so that you may not be distressed at the trials and annoyances of the road, and may tread it with courage and not grow weary; . . . Remember, the Lord invites us all; and, since He is Truth Itself, we cannot doubt Him. If His invitation were not a general one, He

the garden of our hearts.[2] Now that we have found the hidden mystical treasure, we must prepare ourselves to exchange for it all the goods of this world.[3] Since we have been enriched with the divine talents, it is our duty to cultivate them, to put them to good use, and to negotiate with them in order to make them increase both for the service of our Master and for the profit of our souls.[4] For that reason, we must ask Him to give us prudence in all things and to fill us with His Spirit of wisdom by which we shall be able worthily to appreciate His gifts.[5] In order to use these gifts well it is expedient

would not have said: 'I will give you to drink!' He might have said: 'Come, all of you, for after all you will lose nothing by coming; and I will give drink to those whom I think fit for it.' But, as He said we were all to come, without making this condition, I feel sure that none will fail to receive this living water unless they cannot keep to the path. . . . His mercy is so great that He has forbidden none to strive to come and drink of this fountain of life. Blessed be He forever! What good reasons there would have been for His forbidding me!

"But as He did not order me to cease from drinking when I had begun to do so, . . . it is certain that He will forbid no one to come; indeed. He calls us publicly, and in a loud voice to do so. Yet, as He is so good, He does not force us to drink, but enables those who wish to follow Him to drink in many ways so that none may lack comfort or die of thirst. . . . From this rich spring flow many streams—some large, others small, and also little pools for children, which they find quite large enough, for the sight of a great deal of water would frighten them: by children, I mean those who are in the eaily stages.

"As I say, it is most important—all-important, indeed,—that they should begin well by making an earnest and most determined resolve not to halt until they reach their goal, whatever may come, whatever may happen to them, however hard they may have to labour, whoever may complain of them, whether they reach their goal or die on the road or have no heart to confront the trials which they meet, whether the very world dissolves before them. . . . By taking this road we gain such precious treasures that it is no wonder if the cost seems to us a high one. The time will come when we shall realize that all we have paid has been nothing at all by comparison with the greatness of our prize."

2 Ecclus. 24:42 f.: "I said: I will water my garden of plants, and I will water abundantly the fruits of my meadow. And behold my brook became a great river, and my river came near to a sea."

3 Cf. Matt. 13:44-46.

4 Matt. 25:14-30. Mary of Agreda, *Mystical City of God,* Bk. I, Part I, 20: "These favors and benefits of the Almighty are of such a nature, that the more they are understood and made secure, so much the more will they excite care and solicitude for their preservation and for the avoidance of any offence of their Author. . . . As they are seen to belong to such a high Master, to whom they can revert to be distributed according to his pleasure, a most deep-felt solicitude fills the soul lest it lose again what is thus freely given. The soul therefore begins to work with great diligence in order to preserve them and to multiply the talent (Matt. 25:15) since it understands that to be the only means of keeping the deposit and of fulfilling the object for which they were given, namely, to make them bear fruit and to contribute to the glory of the Creator."

5 Wisd. 7:7-14: "Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me. And I preferred her

that we know what is meant by "good traffic" and that we take care that our "lamp shall not be put out in the night." e

We must, then, study the process of development of the precious seed of divine grace and see what careful attention it requires in each particular instance. We must learn how to prepare and cultivate the field of our heart wherein this seed is sown. We must root out every kind of evil weed so that it will not suffocate the good plant of grace and we must cultivate it carefully so that it will grow prosperously.

Spiritual Renewal and Mortification

The entire process of the supernatural life consists in ridding ourselves of the old man with all his acts and clothing ourselves with the new.7 The old man is the fallen and degenerate Adam; the new man is Jesus Christ, Son of God and our Savior, the perfect man, the principle of our supernatural life and the restorer of humanity.8 The old man in us is nature vitiated by the sin of Adam and the countless defects which it has accumulated, leaving it so misshapen, so prone to evil, so assailed by wicked propensities, that it feels itself incapable of fulfilling even the natural law. The new man in us is nature regenerated, rectified, enriched, and reanimated by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Our spiritual progress consists in acquiring the most perfect purity of heart and the most complete submission and docility to the motions and influxes of the Holy Ghost which prompt and inspire us with the sentiments of our Savior and impress His divine image on us. If we do not resist Him by our indocility, nor choke and impede His action by the impurity of our worldly desires, He will renew the face of our earth and will transform us from glory to glory.

The ideal of the Christian, then, is to dispossess himself of self in order to reproduce the living image of the new man; to act in all things as a true son of God, living and working according to His Spirit and following His motion and direction without the least

before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. . . . For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use, become the friends of God, being commended for the gift of discipline."

e Prov. 31:18.

7 Cf. Col. 3:9 f.

8 Rom. 5:12; 6:6-12; I Cor. 15:13-49; Eph. 4:23 f.

resistance. The Christian will manifest himself the more a true son of God as he is more animated by His Spirit.[8]

But to arrive at this true and glorious liberty of the sons of God, it is necessary to break the heavy chains of the evil inclinations which enslave us, to root out all vices and sinful habits, and to tame and restrain completely our rebellious and disordered passions. We must watch over the most hidden movements and sentiments of our hearts, rectify all that is crooked, resist all suggestions of evil, and smother the concupiscence of self-love, so that we shall have no other desires or interests than those of Jesus Christ.[10] By lovingly uniting ourselves to Him in a perfect conformity of wills, we shall be transformed and made one with Him, living entirely in His Spirit.[11] When the Spirit of our Lord reigns in us, we shall enjoy full and perfect liberty. *Ubi Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas.*[12]

From this we can understand how great and laborious must be our preparation for the way of the Lord [13] which leads to a most loving union with God and the perfect manifestation of His life within us.

He is purity itself and sanctity by His essence; He is absolute honesty and simplicity. But as for us, "from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein." [14] Everything in us is more or less stained by original sin, by hereditary vices which have been accumulated, and more especially by personal sins which, however light they may be, contaminate and pervert the soul.[15]

• Cf. Rom. 8:14.

[10] Blessed Henry Suso, *Union,* chap. 2: "A man who is fully resigned must spurn the frivolities and phantasies of creatures and seek only to impress Jesus Christ on his heart and be transformed into His Divinity. He who is dead to self and lives the life of Jesus Christ, takes all things for good and desires that each thing be placed in its proper order. He who is recollected, readily notes his own defects in the light of Truth. He knows the disordered love which can bind creatures and the attachments which prevent them from seeking perfection. When God interiorly chides him, he humbles himself with docility and realizes that as yet he is not free of creatures or of self. ... If a man seeks to be recollected and to be united with Truth, he must be raised above the life of the senses to be transformed in God. He must see if there be any obstacle which comes between God and himself and if he find none, he will rejoice in the divine essence in the light of that union and because of it he will forget all things else. The more he separates himself from self and creatures, the more united to God will he live and the more happy will he be."

[11] Cf. I Cor. 6:17.

[12] Cf. II Cor. 3:17. i(

[13] Isa. 40; Matt. 3:3: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

[14] Isa. 1:6.

to Prov. 8:36.

It is to be admitted that, as the physiologists say, with every vicious or disordered act, there is set up an "evil organization of neurons" and there is formed a "circuit" which tends automatically to reproduce itself later, even independent of the will. With the repetition of bad actions, those evil "organizations" are strengthened and they finally become hereditary. So it is that by the evil deeds of our progenitors, and more especially by our own evil acts, the ravages of original sin are aggravated and the wave of evil is strengthened and increased.[10] However light many of those acts may seem, when considered as having accumulated their effects for thousands of years, we can understand how true it is that there is nothing healthy in us. Disorderly tendencies have been rooted in the very depths of our being and there is not in our whole organism the smallest sensitive or motor element which is not in some way contaminated. Moreover, the vices of the body extend beyond the body itself and are felt in the very potencies of the soul, if, indeed, they are not already rooted in those potencies, as happens in the case of voluntary faults.

It is necessary to exercise extreme violence in order to purify, simplify, and sanctify our entire being and to renew and direct that complicated maze according to the simple divine norms by which the senses and appetites are subject to reason and this, in turn, to the divine Spirit so that our union with God is perfect. Only in this way can our being be rectified, corrected, and brought back to its normal status, to a position where it can be enriched and transformed.

This mortification is not a killing, but a healing; a rectification and a renewal. If our nature were completely healthy and well balanced, it would spontaneously submit to the superior norm which ennobles it, just as all the physical energies in a perfect organism are subjected to the plan of life: organic life to sensitive life, and this latter to rational life. But when there is an imperfection of any kind, the inferior powers readily become insubordinate and instead of the *relative* autonomy which they enjoy, they tend to absolute sovereignty and even tyranny. Therefore it is necessary to keep these lower powers in subjection so that they will observe right order.

16 See our work, *La Providenda y la Evoluciôn,* I, 145-50.

Whenever the inferior appetites of a man become insubordinate and act contrary to reason (and this usually occurs by the very fact that reason itself seeks to be completely autonomous), then that man must do violence to himself and even to reason itself, by submitting it to faith,[17] so that in all things the Spirit of God may reign anew.[18]

The rationalists, although they call themselves reformed Christians, do not understand the privation and violence done to nature, for they live in a dream world of pure naturalism. As a result, they seek always to justify human nature as if it possessed the same integrity now as it did when it first came forth from the hand of God. But if they would even slightly examine human nature as we now possess it, they would find in it innumerable disorderly and uncontrolled tendencies which are more animal than human. They would then learn the necessity of self-violence if a man is to live not only as a Christian but even as a true man.[19]

17 See II Cor. 10:3-6: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ; and having in readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be fulfilled."

18 Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* III, 1, art. 2: "To be able to conceive how requisite purity of heart is to us, it would be necessary fully to comprehend the natural corruption of the human heart. There is in us a very depth of malice, which we do not perceive, because we never seriously examine our own interior. If we did, we should find therein a multitude of desires and irregular appetites for the honours, the pleasures, and the comforts of the world unceasingly fermenting in our heart.

"We are so full of false ideas and erroneous judgments, of disorderly affections, passions, and malice, that we should stand confounded at ourselves, could we see ourselves such as we are. Let us imagine a muddy well, from which water is continually being drawn: at first, what comes up is scarcely anything but mud; but by dint of drawing, the well is gradually cleansed, and the water becomes purer, until at last it is as clear as crystal. In like manner, by labouring incessantly to purge our soul, the ground of it becomes gradually cleared, and God manifests his presence by powerful and marvelous effects which he works in the soul, and through it, for the good of others.

"When the heart is thoroughly cleansed, God fills the soul and all its powers, the memory, the understanding, and the will, with his holy presence and love. Thus purity of heart leads to union with God, and no one ordinarily attains thereto by other means."

19 Fonsegrive, *Le Catholicisme et la religion,* pp. 19-21: "In spite of mortification, there need be no fear that the Catholic ideal will atrophy us or diminish our life. However much men may say that we expect the ideal to be realized much later and that meanwhile we seize only the shadow, the fact of the matter is that all must mortify themselves in one way or another. They must do this whether they

If these unlawful tendencies were subjected to reason, then reason itself, which is made to feel its weakness, deficiency, and irregularity in many things, would, for its own good, cease to aspire to a chimerical and destructive independence and would joyfully accept the infallible norms of the supreme Reason. As it approached to God and became more and more enlightened, it would discover in itself thousands of other imperfections and impurities of which it was not aware formerly. It would realize that, short of absolute sanctity, no creature is sufficiently pure. It would see the necessity for God to purify reason with the fire of His power and to fortify it with the strength of His Spirit of renewal. Therefore nature as it is in itself, cannot be canonized.

That to which we do violence in our nature is not the basically good structure which came from the hands of God, but those disorderly tendencies which have been connaturalized by human faults. Once these tendencies are under control, the natural life is purified to such an extent that it can be developed without offering any resistance to the Spirit and without impeding the growth of the supernatural life. We do not seek to destroy or bury the natural gifts which we have received from God, but we do seek to restore them to their primitive purity so that they may be better developed at the same time that, transformed by grace, they are raised to a divine order to produce fruits of life eternal.[20]

will or no, for the simple reason that it is impossible for us to satisfy all our desires, tendencies, and caprices. Therefore all moralists admit that there must be a struggle against the passions and that in order to attain interior silence, which is a necessary condition for true life, one must flee the world and the clamor of the senses. The freethinker, E. Clay, shows in his *Alternative,* that 'there is no remedy other than to choose between becoming a man or remaining a beast.' But one cannot restrain the beast and live like a man if there is no suffering. It is only on the rocky summit of Calvary that one picks the perfect flower of humanity. The way of the Cross is the only way which leads to true life.

"Sabatier condemns mortification as 'an inferior and reprehensible formula of moral discipline.' Therefore the *new* disciples of Jesus correct the plan of the divine Master who, by word and example, recommended mortification. If a doctor can prescribe fasting in order to facilitate the physiological functions, why is this also not fitting or necessary for the spiritual functions? And if a doctor prescribes many painful remedies, why cannot the soul command similar remedies for the body, if they are useful or necessary to reduce it to obedience and to make it docile to the spirit?" See also Rodriguez, *Ejerdtio de Perfection,* II, i, 9.

20 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, 9: "Thou, O my Lord, dost not exact of me, or of any of Thy other spouses, that we should annihilate ourselves to the extent of destroying the natural gifts which we possess. These belong to Thee, who hast

The first step that we must take in our renewal is that of doing violence to ourselves in order to renounce all disordered tastes and appetites. We must subject and mortify our senses so that they will not lead us to evil, and we must castigate our body and reduce it to submission so that it will not covet anything contrary to the spirit. In this way alone can we truly begin the spiritual way.

This continual mortification, so despised and disdained by worldly persons today and little appreciated by those who presume to be spiritual but believe that by mortification they are acting contrary to life, is absolutely indispensable if we are to reform and correct ourselves. In order to root out our evil habits and disordered inclinations, in order to purify and reintegrate our nature so that it may live healthily as God created it and not be vitiated as it is through sin, mortification is of prime importance. This self-violence will completely choke the seed of evil so that it cannot fructify and thus smother the good. By destroying the seed of concupiscence, it will free us from the slavery of sin.[21] Mortification cultivates the soil of our heart so that the divine seed grows therein without hindrance and produces abundant fruit. Finally, mortification controls and subjugates our bodies with all their sensitive faculties so that they resist not, but are obedient to reason, and reason itself is so directed that it is entirely submissive to the Spirit.

Only thus shall we avoid saddening the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. We shall, rather, obey Him in all things and cooperate with His every operation and all His loving inspirations until we have been totally renewed. Far from perishing because of mortification, our nature will become revivified in health and purity and enriched with grace. For God does not wish to kill us, but to

given them to us. Thou hast given to one, two talents; to another, three; to yet another, five (Matt. 25). It is foolishness to restrain our natural gifts, for they can be of service to us in Thy honor and glory."

St. Teresa, *Book of the Foundations,* chap. 6: "From this we must learn that anything which gets the better of us to such an extent that we think our reason is not free must be considered suspicious, for in that way we shall never gain freedom of spirit, one of the marks of which is that we can find God in all things even while we are thinking of them. Anything other than this is spiritual bondage, and, apart from the harm which it does to the body, it constrains the soul and retards its growth."

21 Rom. 6:6; ". . . that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer."

vivify us. He desires not the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live. It was for that reason that He sent His Son "to seek and save that which was lost." [22] Although mortification outwardly appears painful and bitter, actually it is joyful, consoling, delightful, and filled with ineffable delights.

It matters little that the worldly and the carnal do not understand these things nor wish to understand them. Those who are spiritual understand them very well. The presumptuous wisdom of the worldly ones is pure stupidity and is inimical to God, for it is impossible to please God by living according to the flesh. Carnal prudence is death, but that of the Spirit is life and peace. Therefore, if we live according to the flesh, we shall surely die; but if, in obedience to the Spirit, we mortify the inclinations of the flesh, we shall live.[23]

This, indeed, is the teaching of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, when he writes:

For they that are according to the flesh, mind the things that are of the flesh; but they that are according to the spirit, mind the things that are of the spirit. For the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be. And they who are in the flesh, cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead, because of sin; but the spirit liveth, because of justification. And if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.[24]

To cure a corporal infirmity, doctors prescribe diets and purges and distasteful medicines and even the use of iron and fire. So also "he that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in

22 Luke 19:10.

23 Bacuez, *Manuel biblique,* no. 587: "Contrary to the flesh, the spirit signifies the superior part of the soul insofar as it is animated by the spirit of God and shares in His dispositions (Rom. 8:4-10; I Cor. 2:4; 6:17; 14:14-15; Gal. 3:3; 5:16; 6:8). The spirit should reign over the inferior part; it should rectify and perfect it. . . , to be its light, its reins, its directive power, its rule. The spirit should assimilate the inferior part to itself in such a way that it appears to be the very same nature and one thing with it."

24 Rom. 8:5-13.

this world, keepeth it unto life eternal," for, "unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." 25

If mortification and the continual watch over self seem to be and actually are difficult at the start, later on and little by little they become easy and even delightful with the help of grace. Grace makes the rough smooth, the heavy light, the bitter sweet, the difficult easy. Those who already have some experience in these things know that the yoke of the Lord is sweet and His burden light (Matt. 11:13).

The important thing is to begin at once with resolution and courage. The kingdom of God suffers violence and the violent carry it away.26 If one seeks it above all things else, with ardor

2BJohn 12:25, 24. Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 22: "The seed cannot be converted into a tree, nor the flower into fruit unless first they die. . . . The more the flower withers, fades away and dies, the more does the fruit appear and prosper. So also, he who diligently denies himself and dies to self and all things and remains dead to them, begins to exist more truly, more essentially and more fruitfully in God."

Weiss, *Apologie,* IX, 9: "Without mortification there can be no lasting fire, no consolation, no devotion. There will be no strength in time of temptation nor any victory in the actual struggle. Without mortification there is neither stability nor progress. Mortification is the death of the passions, the remedy for sinful pleasure, the stroke applied to the root of evil. It is the nourishment of zeal, the unction of prayer, the way of union with God. Learn to esteem and practice mortification and very soon you will witness the change which God has wrought in you. . . . Each step to perfection cost the saints a painful fight, and they bought at a great price every one of the consolations which they derived from their union with God."

St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* III, 12: "Thou givest us nothing without effort on our part, O Lord! To find Thee, it is necessary to seek Thee with great exertion (Prov. 8). Thou hast promised us life on the condition that we consent to die. . . . Just as Thou didst sacrifice Thyself to give us salvation, so also Thou dost desire that man, after Thy example, should be willing to immolate himself in body and soul in order to fulfill Thy loving and all-powerful will. As regards the nudity of our heart and spirit, we can do nothing but stammer. . . . Yet this is a prodigy of grace, which we would make known, were we but able. It is an inestimable treasure to which all the riches of the world cannot be compared. He who finds this treasure, though humanly speaking he may be impoverished, despoiled, and deprived of all things, supernaturally possesses the fullness of wisdom and knowledge and all the gifts of God" (Isa. 33).

For the worldly, these things are all enigmas and foolishness. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know these things: for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall in them" (Osee 14:10).

26 Matt. 11:12. St. Catherine de Ricci (*Life* by Marchesi, chap. 24) once saw a large meadow in which there was situated a most beautiful fountain and in this meadow our Lord had His throne, surrounded by many angels and saints. The angels and saints urged St. Catherine's religious to approach the divine Spouse who lovingly called them. But to reach Him, they had to cross a pool of deep water, and this caused them to be much afraid. Nevertheless the more valiant, at the first

and with love, then he will see that with it come all things else in addition.[27]

The more we work at our abnegation and annihilation, the more progress shall we make in the spiritual way. Advancement consists in emptying and purifying our hearts to let them be taken over by the divine Spirit who must effect our renewal and transformation. He is communicated and works perfectly only when He finds a heart that is empty and clean and that does not close its door through the inflation of self-love, a heart that does not obstruct His indwelling by its vices and impurities nor resist Him by reason of its earthly attachments and inordinate inclinations. Therefore the first lesson which must be learned in the school of Christ is: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."[28]

sign from the Lord, thinking of nothing but His pleasure, threw themselves into the water. Though it cost them no little effort and they seemed many times on the verge of drowning, they finally succeeded in crossing over and were very joyful, beautiful, and crowned with flowers. Then the most holy Virgin presented them to her divine Son, who took them for His own with great love.

The other religious, being cowardly, entered the pool only with great difficulty and needed much help and persuasion from the saints. Yet these also, with great effort, finally emerged beautiful like the others, although they were crowned not with flowers but with thorns.

Since St. Catherine was astonished at this vision, the Lord deigned to explain it by saying that, to arrive at the happiness of His glory, it is necessary to pass through the waters of great tribulations. Those who, through love of Him, endure all patiently, although they seem on the point of drowning in the pool, emerge crowned with flowers. Their very efforts are changed to flowers because such souls do not count them as painful. But those who enter the pool by force are crowned with thorns because they considered their tribulations painful and difficult.

"In regard to sacrifices," said the Curé of Ars, "it is only the first step that is difficult."

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* II, I, i, art. 2: "Consider two religious: one who from the very first gives himself up to God, and resolves to spare nothing to secure his sanctification: another, who walks at a slow pace and has not the courage to rise superior to more than half his difficulties. Compare the life of the one with the life of the other—I say the whole life, and not a mere portion of it—and you will find that the lukewarm will have suffered much more than the fervent. *Destruction and unhappiness in their ways,* says the royal prophet, speaking of those cowardly souls who do not give themselves up generously to God; *and the way of peace they have not known"* (Ps. 13:3).

27 "In the Gospel the first thing that I commanded to be sought," said the Savior to St. Gertrude, "is the kingdom of God and His justice (Luke 12:31); that is, interior progress. I did not say that it is necessary secondly to seek exterior progress, but I have promised to give it in addition. Would that all who desire to become friends of God, and especially religious, would consider the importance of these words."

28 Luke 9:23.

We must, on the one hand, do extreme violence to ourselves in order to resist evil inclinations and to root out all our vices; on the other hand, we must resign ourselves to the will of God, joyfully accepting all those little crosses that He sends to us each day. These crosses are like so many different medicines by which He heals the wounds of our souls; so many lessons by which He enlightens our understanding and protects us from the snares of the world, sweetly teaching us how to practice perfectly the ordinary virtues and preparing us for the extraordinary ones.[29] The cross, then, is our salvation and our light, our life and resurrection.

If we are attentive to God's action on us, which is the expression of His holy will in our regard, and to the voice of His Spirit which is continually speaking to us in the depth of our hearts, telling us what is most fitting for us to do or omit at each moment, we can faithfully follow in the footsteps of the Savior who was Himself led and guided in all things by the divine Spirit. We shall thus be able to imitate His example and to learn of Him meekness and humility of heart. By embracing our daily crosses lovingly, we shall accompany Him on the way to Calvary where the work of our reparation will be fully realized.[30]

We must accompany Jesus Christ in His sufferings if we are to rise with Him to a new and glorious life wherein we shall be able to enjoy the things that are above.[31] We must be "always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies."[32] This manifestation of Christ's life in our body will take place when the body

[29] *Interior Castle,* seventh mansions, chap. 4: "I told you elsewhere that the devil sometimes puts ambitious desires into our hearts, so that, instead of setting our hand to the work which lies nearest to us, and thus serving Our Lord in ways within our power, we may rest content with having desired the impossible."

[30] "I desire to instruct you by My example," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena *(Life,* I, ir), "and to teach you how to triumph by the way of the Cross. If you wish to make yourself strong against the enemy, take the Cross as your safeguard. . . . Embrace pains and afflictions. Do not be content with enduring them patiently, but embrace them with love, for they are veritable treasures. He who suffers them the better for My sake, becomes more like unto Me. . . . Therefore, beloved daughter, in imitation of Me, look upon sweet things as bitter and bitter things as sweet, and be assured that in this way you will always be strong."

[31] Col. 3:1 f.: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you arc dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God."

[32] See II Cor. 4:10.

is entirely pure and holy. Hence the rigorous fasts, the rough hair-shirts, the painful disciplines, the arduous vigils, and all the other austerities by which penitent souls purify themselves of their faults and root out their evil inclinations. Such souls fully realize that, as they formerly yielded their members as slaves of uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now they must yield their members as slaves of justice unto sanctification.[33]

It is in the school of Christian mortification and abnegation that one learns the science of the saints, and this science is nothing other than "the folly of the Cross." The crucified Christ, who was a scandal to the Jews and a stumbling block to the Gentiles, is to the chosen ones the very power and wisdom of God.[34] He who follows Jesus Christ in all His sufferings, does not walk in darkness, but has the light of life.[35]

Thus, abnegation and mortification lead directly to illumination and vivification. The science of salvation, the prudence of the spirit, the knowledge of eternal truths, and heavenly wisdom are not found "in the land of them that live in delights." [30] Those who are worldly do not understand this rigorous mortification. But those who are truly spiritual and are able to evaluate things precisely, not only understand it but practice it with such ardor that usually they need to be restrained rather than stimulated. They are accustomed to conceive such a hatred for the corruptible body which is a load upon the soul and presseth down the mind [37] and they would castigate it so rigorously that, if their directors did not restrain them or the Spirit of counsel did not assist them, they would endanger their health and incapacitate themselves for divine service.

On the other hand, they discover such enchantments in the interior life that in order to feel and enjoy them fully they would wish to die completely to the ordinary life of the senses. That is their whole ambition: *to suffer or to die.* For this reason they scrutinize the movements of the heart most diligently to see if there is any vice to be purged or any affection to be rooted out.

[38] Rom. 6:19-22.
[84] See I Cor. 1: i8-24.
[85] John 8:12.
[88] Job 28:13.
[87] Wisd. 9:15.

They keep a strict watch over their most secret inclinations in order to do violence to self and absolutely to deny themselves whatever is not fully in accord with the divine will. Thus they are perpetually dying to self that they may live only for God.

By a total abnegation of self they mortify their passions and keep them under subjection. In the measure that they despoil themselves of the "old man" with all his works and concomitant worldly and egoistic affections and cares, they become resplendent with the image of the new and heavenly man. Ultimately they reach the point where they rise with Him and begin a new life with its conversation always in heaven.[38]

By reason of the sensible fervor which God usually communicates to generous souls at the start, they begin to have a loathing and disgust for everything earthly and they aspire only to the divine. They find delight in prayer, the frequent reception of the sacraments, spiritual conversations and pious reading, and the tender devotions which Christian piety suggests. When not occupied in such practices they busy themselves in works of charity and mercy or in other activities proper to the service of God.

Worldly conversations and anything that breathes forth a mundane air is unbearable to them. They practice good works with such zeal, fervor, and facility and they make such progress in virtue that they seem already to have reached the pinnacle of sanctity and to live there as deified souls. This actually happens on those rare occasions when souls have from the very start attained to true negation of self, complete death to themselves in all things, and a strict vigilance over the hidden life of the interior; that is to say, when such souls have reached perfect purity of heart, fidelity to grace, and docility to the impulses of the Holy Ghost.

Progressive Purification

St. John of the Cross states [38] that those souls are very few who in the beginning journey with such a high degree of perfection. The

[38] St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogue,* I, 15: "By ridding itself of the old man and his works (Col. 3), the soul arrives at a state where it has no knowledge of its own existence except in complete abnegation of its own will. The will of God alone directs all the activities of its being and in all things the divine will is, as it were, the very breath of its life."

[38] *Dark Night of the Soul,* Bk. I, chap. 2.

common occurrence is that souls possess for a long time certain affections which they have not yet renounced. These fixations cause them to live under tyranny and violence and prevent them from following perfectly the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. As a result, they are exposed to the commission of many imperfections in all that they do. In spite of their diligence, there remain certain secret vices, very difficult to recognize and even more difficult to eradicate without higher lights and powers. Yet, as long as they possess these vices it is impossible for them to make any notable progress. From this follows the fixed condition in which so many souls remain because they do not abandon themselves completely to the action of God. From this also follows the retrogression of those who positively resist God by reason of their voluntary attachments.[40]

If the divine Renewer does not build the house of our hearts, destroying in it all that is fragile and badly constructed to restore it by His own operations, if He does not consume all our impurities with the fire of His charity and enrich us with His gifts, then we shall labor in vain to build an edifice to His liking. Nor will He carry this work to completion if we do not abandon ourselves blindly to His hands so that Fie can destroy and rebuild according to His pleasure. He who does not completely abandon himself, however much the exterior fervor which he manifests and however great the virtues which he practices, is as yet far from arriving at true sanctity.[41] All that he may accomplish by his pen-

40 St. Catherine of Genoa, *loc. cit.:* "When God takes possession of our hearts, He wants them to be undivided. Being possessed of a holy jealousy for His omnipotent sovereignty. He will not tolerate that any creature be given the least particle of that which belongs to Him alone." See St. Catherine of Siena, *Life,* III, 4.

Fénelon, *Sentences de piété:* "The divine sanctity desires to possess our whole heart without anything lacking, and He considers as His declared enemies all those who possess a divided heart. He permits them to make use of creatures but never to have an attachment for creatures. It is never so necessary to be abandoned to God as when He seems to abandon us. We receive His light and consolation when He gives it, but we must never attach ourselves to these things humanly. When we are submerged in the night of pure faith, we must suffer ourselves to be carried and we must lovingly endure the agony."

41 Grou, *Manuel,* p. 24: "Sanctity is begun with our efforts, aided by grace; it is terminated and perfected by the divine operation. Man strives to build the edifice as much as he can, but since there is something human in this edifice, God destroys the work of man to replace it with His own, and the creature is forced to cease working. Man no longer works, but he suffers, for it is God who works. No violence is done, however, when man suffers this activity. This purely passive state is undoubt-

anccs, voluntary privations, and good works is as nothing when compared with what God desires and demands in the perfect union. I lowcvcr great the active purgations, they are but superficial, for the disorder in human nature penetrates to its very marrow.

If a fervent soul seems to scale the heights of sanctity from the very first moment, it does not on that account cease to be still a child in virtue. The virtues of such a soul, although they appear to be most beautiful, are still very tender; they lack firmness and must be strengthened by tribulation. The soul's evil inclinations are covered over, but not rooted out, and its good works are vitiated by the many imperfections that are inadvertently committed. If such a soul served God with great fervor, it is because of the sensible gifts by which He attracted it and because in serving Him and sacrificing itself for Him, the soul found more consolation than in all the things of earth.

As a result, the soul presumptuously aspires to heroic works which are far superior to its powers while it neglects its obligations or does not accept its ordinary crosses. The soul is still full of affections that separate it from God and make it seek self in everything, thus causing inquietude, impatience, lack of conformity, peevishness, and feigned emulation. Because of its sensible fervor, the soul presumes that it possesses something of itself and even prefers itself over more advanced souls who give no signs of such fervor.

That such a soul may be corrected in regard to those hidden vices which impede its progress, the divine Doctor must discover them and, placing His hand in the wounds, make the soul feel them keenly. He does this mercifully when He sees that the soul is strong enough to endure such a painful cure. When the soul loses

edly painful beyond compare. While man was working alone, he was moved by his own power, he depended on his own activity, and satisfied his self-love by attributing to himself a good share of the victory. But now God works alone and deprives the soul of all power of activity. The soul sees that it is God who works in it and that of itself it can do nothing at all, nor can it appropriate anything to itself. Further, the activity of God at that stage consists, in the estimation of the soul, in destroying and tearing down, despoiling it and reducing it to perfect nakedness. He demands nothing from the soul except submission to this total spoliation. . . . Oh how great and how difficult a work is this destruction, this annihilation of the creature! How great a struggle it is for years and years! . . . How much valor is required to carry to completion this war against self and even more to let oneself be crushed under the omnipotent hand of God!"

all interest in the world because of the sensible favors granted it and fixes its affections on the things of God, then God usually takes away all those pleasures and gifts so that the soul will learn to seek l lim disinterestedly and to love Him for His own sake and not because of His gifts.42

That the soul may realize this more keenly and not dare to presume upon itself, God makes it feel the weight of its own weakness and nothingness. To this end He permits or even disposes that the soul should be tempted and tested in a thousand ways. He does this so that the soul may learn through experience, be well established in humility, and through its struggles be strengthened in virtue in order truly to triumph over its evil tendencies.43 During the time of sensible fervor these evil tendencies were dormant but they were not destroyed. Then when the sensible fervor disappears and these inclinations are aroused by the enemy, they are once more let loose and manifest themselves as being more uncontrolled and more furious than ever. The soul which formerly thought itself to be something now suddenly finds itself on the very edge of the abyss. It is confused and terrified and, if it does not wish to

42 At this stage, a special type of abnegation is required. As Lallemant says *(op. cit.,* Ill, z, art. 6): "Self-abnegation in the case of beginners consists in withdrawing from the occasions of sin, in mortifying their passions, their own will and private judgment. In those who have made some progress in the spiritual life, it consists in not attaching themselves to the gifts of God. For although we acknowledge that we hold everything from God, we nevertheless act as if the graces which are the gift of his pure mercy, were our own by nature; as if we could keep and possess them in the same manner as we possess the presents which we have received from the liberality of men; which is false.

"God, in order to prevent this appropriation of his graces, sometimes withdraws them, and takes from us that facility in the practice of virtues which he had given us; so that we shall seem to ourselves to have become again proud or sensual, and shall experience as much difficulty in humbling and mortifying ourselves as we felt at the beginning. But God acts thus only for our good; we must not interfere with him; he has his own work to do at present, and we have to learn to endure the operation of his hand. *Ut simus patientes divina.*

"He deprives us of his consolations and of sensible devotion in prayer and in our other exercises, to try our fidelity, and to place us in that perfect nudity of spirit in which those souls ought to be which the Holy Spirit would fill with his gifts. All that we have to do on our part is to keep our heart as pure as possible; carefully avoiding the least faults, and for the rest giving ourselves up wholly to God, and submitting to all the dispensations of his providence."

43Ecclus. 34:9 f.: "What doth he know, that hath not been tried? ... He that hath no experience, knoweth little." But the soul that has been tempted and proved can say with Jeremias (31:18): "Thou hast chastised me, and I was instructed." "From above He hath sent fire into my bones, and hath chastised me" (Lam. 1:13).

succumb, it must struggle and do extreme violence to self. It must now relinquish all self-confidence and place all its trust in God.[44] The soul now realizes clearly the insignificance of its powers and, if it is to be faithful, it can do nothing but continually resort to prayer to implore divine aid.

Even greater trials await these poor souls at this period. They find their most cruel martyrdom in those things in which they formerly found their consolation and in which they now expected to find a remedy for their condition.[45] Everything now is disgusting, arid, obscure, and difficult. It seems that God has completely abandoned the soul and cast it from His presence. Temptations grow stronger instead of diminishing. To add to the soul's confusion, it suffers torments of scruples and weakness and, instead of consolation and help, it finds on all sides nothing but disdain, persecution, scoffing, and calumny. Everything seems to converge to separate the soul from the path of righteousness.

The soul's most faithful friends turn against it and become evil advisers. Even its director seems at times to disconcert it, and all joy is turned into sorrow. If such souls are not truly faithful, magnanimous, and generous, they will be disposed, amid the many difficulties that accumulate in ever greater numbers, to follow the

44 Grou, *Manuel,* p. 40: "In the beginning, when the soul experiences the sensible effects of grace and seems to be full of lights and power, it is natural that it should deem itself capable of doing and suffering all things for God. In this state the soul petitions Him for still greater crosses and humiliations, believing itself strong enough for anything. This type of presumption, born as it is from a lack of experience and a mental attitude which erroneously produces an awareness of grace, is not displeasing to God when the soul is simple and upright. For then the soul does not fully realize what it is doing nor is it guilty of vain self-complacency. But He is always desirous of curing the soul of this high opinion which it has of itself. For that reason He withdraws from it all sensible graces and abandons it, as it were, to its own powers. In this state, the soul feels nothing but disgust and repugnance and it encounters obstacles and difficulties on all sides. Where formerly it considered itself equal to even the greatest dangers, it now succumbs even to light ones. A glance, a gesture, a little word is sufficient to disconcert it. Therefore the soul passes to the opposite extreme: it fears everything, it lacks confidence, and it is convinced that it can never successfully overcome anything. . . . God keeps the soul in this condition until, after repeated experiences, it is convinced of its incapacity for any kind of good and its necessity of leaning on no one or nothing but Him."

St. John of the Cross says that those who are not so simple and fervent are in more danger and are more exposed to commit grave faults.

45 Well may the soul in this condition say with Job (30:20-26): "I cry to thee, and Thou hearest me not: . . . Thou art changed to be cruel toward me. . . . I expected good things, and evils are come upon me."

evil counselors who would dissuade them from perseverance in prayer by saying that such is not for them. Then by specious pretexts the soul will actually begin to abandon prayer and renounce all communication and fellowship with God and may even desert Him altogether and return to mundane pleasures.

But God "gave him strong conflict," not that he might be vanquished, but "that he might overcome, and know that wisdom is mightier than all" (Wisd. 10:12). Therefore He does not permit us to be tempted more than we can stand through His grace. He measures these trials according to the strength of each soul and He sends these afflictions only after the soul is sufficiently detached from the world.[46] If, in spite of that fact, the soul weakens, this is because it does not seek God with all sincerity and is not resolved to deny itself in all things. What God desires is that the soul should see profoundly into itself and, recognizing its own nothingness, should abandon itself without reserve and lean always on His loving providence.

Thus the faithful and persevering soul will derive profit even from the faults which it then commits through carelessness or weakness. These very faults will excite it to strive with greater diligence for the attainment of perfect purity of heart and to live in total abandonment to the hands of God.

But those souls that do not possess such generosity and, although they desire to be considered as spiritual, give themselves to God only in half measures, those souls that are actually seeking only themselves and flee from everything painful in the divine service, will find in all things the weight of their own miseries.[47] Turning to look back, after they have put their hand to the plow, they

[46] *Dark Night of the Soul,* Bk. I, chap. 8: "To recollected persons this commonly happens sooner after their beginnings than to others, inasmuch as they are freer from occasions of backsliding, and their desires turn more quickly from the things of the world, which is what is needful if they are to begin to enter this blessed night of sense. Ordinarily no great time passes after their beginnings before they begin to enter this night of sense; and the great majority of them do in fact enter it, for they will generally be seen to fall into these aridities."

[47] "He who gives himself to God only in half a measure," says Mother Mary of the Queen of the Apostles, "is in the worse state. . . . We should aspire to nothing other than the peace which consists in the true union of our will to that of God. Here, and only here, shall we find true happiness. Here, suffering is made sweet." This conformity to the divine dispositions enables us to look at all things through rose-colored glasses, and we should petition God for these glasses because they have the power to sweeten sufferings without depriving them of their merit.

render themselves incapable of passing from this world to the kingdom of heaven. They lead a semi-mundane life and, by fleeing the aridity of prayer, they dedicate themselves solely to exterior works. They live a life that is lukewarm and they scarcely ever attempt to purify their hearts and to merit thereby entrance into the intimate divine fellowship. They are ruled by self-love, and their devotion is false. Unfortunately many such souls abound, to the discredit of true virtue. They are an unceasing and painful martyrdom to pious souls, because these they continually plague by their envy and also by their criticism. Moreover they give themselves the airs of consummate masters when they are not even good disciples.

APPENDIX

1. Purity of Heart and Docility to the Holy Ghost

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* IV, 2, art. 1:

The two elements of the spiritual life are the cleansing of the heart and the direction of the Holy Spirit. These are the two poles of all spirituality. By these two ways we arrive at perfection according to the degree of purity we have attained, and in proportion to the fidelity with which we have cooperated with the movements of the Holy Spirit and followed his guidance.

Our perfection depends wholly on this fidelity, and we may say that the sum of the spiritual life consists in observing the ways and the movements of the Spirit of God in our soul, and in fortifying our will in the resolution of following them employing for this purpose all the exercises of prayer, spiritual reading, the sacraments, the practice of virtues and good works. . . .

The end to which we ought to aspire, after having for a long time exercised ourselves in purity of heart, is to be so possessed and governed by the Holy Spirit that he alone shall direct all our powers and all our senses, and regidate all our movements, interior and exterior, while we, on our part, make a complete surrender of ourselves, by a spiritual renunciation of our own will and our own satisfaction. We shall thus no longer live in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ, by a faithful correspondence with the operations of his divine Spirit, and by a perfect subjection of all our rebellious inclinations to the power of his grace.

2. Ordinary Crosses; Temporal and Eternal Happiness

Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* I, section 9:

I believe that if those souls that tend towards sanctity were instructed as to the conduct they ought to follow, they would be spared a good deal of trouble. I speak as much of people in the world as of others. If they could realize the merit concealed in the actions of each moment of the day; I mean in each of the daily duties of their state of life, and if they could be persuaded that sanctity is founded on that to which they give no heed as being altogether irrelevant, they would indeed be happy. If, besides, they understood that to attain the utmost height of perfection, the safest and surest way is to accept the crosses sent them by Providence at every moment, that the true philosopher's stone is submission to the will of God which changes into divine gold all their occupations, troubles, and sufferings, what consolation would be theirs! What courage would they not derive from the thought that to acquire the friendship of God, and to arrive at eternal glory, they had but to do what they were doing, but to suffer what they were suffering, and that what they wasted and counted as nothing would suffice to enable them to arrive at eminent sanctity: far more so than extraordinary states and wonderful works. O my God! how much I long to be the missionary of Your holy will, and to teach all men that there is nothing more easy, more attainable, more within reach, and in the power of everyone, than sanctity. How I wish that I could make them understand that just as the good and the bad thief had the same things to do and to suffer; so also two persons, one of whom is worldly and the other leading an interior and wholly spiritual life have neither of them, anything different to do or suffer; but that one is sanctified and attains eternal happiness by submission to Your holy will in those very things by which the other is damned because he does them to please himself, or endures them with reluctance and rebellion. . . . Oh! all you that read this, it will cost you no more then to do what you are doing, to suffer what you are suffering, only act and suffer in a holy manner. It is the heart that must be changed. When I say heart, I mean will. Sanctity, then, consists in willing all that God wills for us. Yes! sanctity of heart is a simple "fiat," a conformity of will with the will of God. . . . What could be more easy?

St. Alphonsus Liguori reminds us that we must all suffer in this world, but that he who suffers patiently, suffers less and is saved, whereas he who suffers impatiently, suffers more and is condemned. The Ven. Mariana of Jesus tells us that, once embraced, the cross

is not so heavy. He who flees from one cross, says St. Philip Neri, will later find a greater one. Those who patiently endure tribulations live in heaven; those who do not, live in hell.

3. The Voice of Conscience; Fidelity in Little Matters

Grou, *Manuel,* p. 12:

That which we call the voice of conscience is the voice of God Himself which advises, reprimands, illumines, and directs us. Our duty is to be attentive to it and follow it. It cannot be heard amid tumult and dissipation, but only in solitude, peace, and the silence of the passions and the imagination. The greatest step forward that a soul can take toward perfection is to habituate itself to be attentive to the divine voice, taking care to keep itself at peace and to avoid all dissipation. The soul must for a long time direct its particular examination and daily prayer to this end, endeavoring solely to be in the divine presence and to speak to God, not from the mouth, but from the heart, striving to hear His words.

In another place, Father Grou adds (pp. 98-102):

In God's eyes nothing is small. . . . Some particular thing that may seem small to us, can have such influence that our perfection, or even our salvation, depends upon it. God attaches His graces to whatever He pleases, and we cannot know the consequences, good or evil, of an action that to us seems to be of little importance. We are ignorant of the graces which that action will obtain for us if we perform it or of the graces we shall lose by not performing it. In such uncertainty, the only solution is most perfect fidelity. Great deeds and opportunities for great deeds rarely present themselves; but smaller deeds are met at every turn. Therefore, if we wait only for great deeds, when shall we show God our love? . . . Moreover, the desire to do or suffer great things is almost always an illusion of self-love. . . . The soul that yearns for heavy crosses, fails before the more ordinary ones that are presented. Let us desire nothing and let us choose nothing, but let us take all things as God sends them to us. . . . Self-love is readily admitted in great works. . . . This danger is not usually present in small deeds, and therefore in them it is easier to preserve humility, for in small acts there is no reason why a person should be compared or preferred to anybody else. Without a doubt, the practice of these deeds will more surelv and more properly lead us, unconsciously, to perfection, which consists in dying completely to self. . . . These little deeds destroy self-love without the soul's being aware of the strokes they inflict. . . . Deliberately to refuse God anything under the pretext

th.it it is of no avail in itself, is to be lacking in love in regard to an essential point; it is to renounce intimate familiarity and union with Him. . . . (!od does not permit the creature to take lightly the fact of pleasing or displeasing Him in the smallest thing.

4. The Wise Foolishness of the Cross

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* IV, 4, art. 1:

There is a folly which is true wisdom before God. To love poverty, contempt, crosses, persecutions; this is to be a fool according to the world's esteem. And yet the wisdom which is a gift of the Holy Spirit is nothing else but this same folly which has a taste only for what our Lord and the saints delighted in. Now Jesus Christ, in everything that he touched during his mortal life, as poverty, abjection, the cross, left a sweet odour, a delicious savour; but few souls have their senses sufficiently purified to perceive this odour and to taste this savour, which are altogether supernatural. The saints have *rim to the odour of these ointments* (Cant. 1:3). . . .

How unlike are the judgements of God to the judgements of men! Divine wisdom is a folly in the judgement of men and human wisdom is folly in the judgement of God. It is for us to see to which of these two judgements we will conform our own. One or the other we must take as the rule of our actions.

If we have a taste for praises and honours, so far we are fools; and the more relish we have for beinç esteemed and honoured, the more foolish we are. As, on the contrary, the more love we have for humiliation and the cross, the wiser we are.

It is monstrous that even in religion there should be found persons who have no taste for anything but what makes them of importance in the eyes of the world; who do all their actions, for the twenty or thirty years of their religious life, only that they may attain some end which they have in view; who scarcely feel either joy or sadness except with reference thereto, or at least are more affected by that than by anything else. As for all that regards God and perfection, it is insipid to them; they feel no relish for it.

This is a fearful state, and worthy of being deplored with tears of blood. For of what perfection are such religious capable? And what fruit can they gather from their labours among others? But what confusion will be theirs at the hour of death, when it shall be disclosed to them that, during the whole course of their life, they have neither sought nor relished anything but show and vanity, like people of the world. Let

such persons be ever so melancholy, only utter a word which gives them a hope of some advancement, however false it may be, and you will instantly see a change come over their countenance, and their heart expand with joy as at the news of some great success.

For the rest, as they have no taste for devotion, they treat its practices as follies, the amusement of weak minds, and not only guide their conduct by these erroneous principles of an earthly and devilish wisdom, but communicate their sentiments also to others, teaching them maxims altogether contrary to those of our Lord and the Gospel, the rigour of which they try to soften by forced interpretations that fall in with the inclinations of corrupt nature; supporting themselves by other passages of Scripture ill understood, on which they build their own ruin; as for example, *curam habe de bono nomine,* be careful of your reputation; *corporalis exercitatio ad modicum valet,* bodily exercise is profitable to little; *rationabile obsequium vestrum,* let your service to God be a reasonable service.

Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom,* chap. 4:

Renounce all pleasure and satisfaction of the senses, avoid all curiosity of eyes and ears, do that which is repugnant to thee, for My love will make it sweet and agreeable to thee. Continually deny thy body every gratification; take pleasure or rest in nothing but Me; bear the defects of others with meekness and humility; love all contempt, combat thy appetites, trample and destroy all thy desires. Such are the lessons which are learned in the school of Wisdom and which are read in the open book of My crucified Body.

Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 23:

For love of God we learn to embrace the lowliest manner of life. But also, many there are who disdain this lowly life. Therefore, the friends of God, out of the love they bear Him, must restore it. They must show it in their garments, in their appearance and all their actions. They must endeavor to make shine forth in all things nothing but true humility and perfect contempt of the world.

Huby, *Maximes,* 5:

Perfect mortification should make me exteriorly deaf, blind, and dumb; interiorly, insensible to everything that does not concern the glory of God. . . . He who thus flees from the world of the senses walks by day, because he advances in the life of grace, which is a life of spirit and light. But those who follow the senses are submerged more and more

in night and darkness. . . . It is necessary to take upon oneself the painful task of departing from the senses since this is an easier task than to follow them, and the farther a person departs from the senses, the less painful becomes this task.

"The way of penance and of My commandments," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena (*Life,* I, 9), "seems at first hard and painful, but as one advances, it becomes sweet and easy. In the way of evil, on the contrary, the beginnings are delightful, but later come pain and danger." *Confessions* of St. Augustine, I, 12: "Thou hast commanded it, and so it truly is, that one's inordinate affection should be bitter to him."

5. Necessity of Continual Death to Self in Order to Live in God

Blessed Henry Suso, *Disciplina spiritualis,* III:

Those who abandon themselves to God with the firm will of serving Him, ought to examine carefully every crevice of their hearts to see whether they possess any hidden affections or any disordered attachments for creatures. If they should find any, they must renounce them and be purified at once. . . . A thousand times a day they should renew their resolution to renounce themselves and all creatures, for in this renunciation and in this death to self lies true perfection. There are some souls that, after forty years spent in doing great works in the service of God . . . consider that they have arrived at perfection, but when they take up the exercises of the spiritual life, they find that they are as far from perfection as they were in the beginning. Hence it is not enough to die to self only once, but this death to self must be continually renewed until the end of life. No one ever dies so completely to self and to the world that there does not remain something more in which he can yet deny and mortify himself. Therefore they are in error who believe that in this life they can arrive at a disinterestedness that is so complete that they no longer need to mortify themselves. The greater the progress a servant of God makes in this task of dying to self, so much the more should we endeavor to secure this sort of death so as to be continually dying to self. How many there are who, after having abandoned themselves to God, turn back to self in a deplorable manner and appropriate to self what does not belong to them!

Lallemant, *op. cit.,* IV, 4, art. 3:

You will sometimes see persons who say they practice the prayer of simple regard, or take the divine perfections for the subject of their meditations, and yet are full of the grossest errors and imperfections, because they have attempted too high a flight before they have purified their heart. But tell them what you think of this, and they get angry, believing themselves already highly spiritual, and consider you but little enlightened in mystical theology; so that, after all, they must be sent back to the first elements of the spiritual life, that is to say, to keeping watch over their hearts, as at the very beginning, if they are to make any progress.

St. Bernard, *In Cant.,* sermo 58, 10: "Who will deem himself so clean that there now remains nothing more to be purified? Indeed, the pruning is scarcely finished when already new sprouts appear. . . . You will always find something else to purify and prune in yourself. No matter how great your progress, you deceive yourself if you think that you are dead to all your vices."

6. Imperfections and Attachments in Beginners

Dark Night of the Soul, Bk. I, chaps. 1 and 2:

The loving mother is like the grace of God, for, as soon as the soul is regenerated by its new warmth and fervour for the service of God, He treats it in the same way; He makes it find spiritual milk, sweet and delectable, in all the things of God, without any labor of its own, and also great pleasure in spiritual exercises, for here God is giving to it the breast of His tender love, even as to a tender child.

Therefore, such a soul finds its delight in spending long periods—perchance whole nights—in prayer; penances are its pleasures; fasts its joys, and its consolations are to make use of the sacraments and commune of Divine things. In the which things spiritual persons . . . commonly find themselves, speaking spiritually, very weak and imperfect. For since they are moved to these things and to these spiritual exercises by the consolation and pleasure that they find in them, and since, too, they have not been prepared for them by the practice of earnest striving in the virtues, they have many faults and imperfections with respect to these spiritual actions of theirs; for, after all, everyone's actions correspond to the habit of perfection attained by him. . . .

As these beginners feel themselves to be very fervent and diligent in spiritual things and devout exercises, from this prosperity . . . there often comes to them, through their imperfections, a certain kind of secret pride, whence they come to have some degree of satisfaction with their works and with themselves. And hence there comes to them likewise a certain desire, which is somewhat vain, and at times very vain, to speak of spiritual things before others, and sometimes even to teach such tilings rather than to learn them. They condemn others in their heart when they see that they have not the kind of devotion which they themselves desire; and sometimes they even say this in words, resembling herein the Pharisee, who boasted of himself, praising God for his own good works and despising the publican.

In these persons the devil often increases the fervour that they have and the desire to perform these and other works more frequently, so that their pride and presumption may grow greater. . . . And such a degree of evil are some of these persons wont to reach that they would have none appear good save themselves; and thus, in deed and word, whenever the opportunity occurs, they condemn them and slander them, beholding the mote in their brother's eye and not considering the beam which is in their own. . . .

Sometimes, too, when their spiritual masters . . . do not approve of their spirit and behaviour . . . , they consider that they do not understand them, or that, they are themselves not spiritual. And so they immediately desire and contrive to find some one else who will fit in with their tastes; . . . Presuming thus, they arc wont to resolve much and accomplish very little. . . .

And sometimes they seek another confessor to tell the W'rongs that they have done, so that their own confessor shall think they have done nothing wrong at all, but only good; and thus they always take pleasure in telling him what is good, and sometimes in such terms as make it appear to be greater than it is, . . .

Some of these beginners, too, make little of their faults, and at other times become over-sad w hen they see themselves fall into them, thinking themselves to have been saints already. . . . They dislike praising others and love to be praised themselves. . . .

From these imperfections some souls go on to develop many very grave ones, which do them great harm. But some have fewer and some more, and some, only the first motions thereof or little further; . . . For this reason, . . . God leads into the dark night those whom He desires to purify from all these imperfections so that Fie may bring them further onward.

7. Abandonment to the Hands of God

Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* II, 4, sect. 3:

With God, the more one seems to lose the more one gains. The more He strikes off of what is natural, the more He gives of what is supernatural. He is loved at first for His gifts, but when these are no longer perceptible He is at last loved for Himself. It is by the apparent withdrawal of these sensible gifts that He prepares the way for that great gift which is the most precious and the most extensive of all, since it embraces all others. Souls which have once and for all submitted themselves to the divine action, ought to interpret everything favourably. Yes, everything! even the loss of the most excellent directors, and the want of confidence they cannot help feeling in those who offer themselves for that post.

St. Catherine of Siena, *Letters,* no. 55:

God permits us to be tempted in order to test our virtues and to increase His grace in us. He sends us temptations, not that we may be overcome, but that we may come forth the victors, depending always, not on our own strength, but on the divine help, saying with the Apostle, *I can do all things in Christ crucified* who dwells in me and strengthens me. Thus, the devil is confounded and conquered and the arms by which he is vanquished are the complete despoliation of one's own will and the putting on of God, judging that all that He permits is for our own good. There is nothing that can harm the soul except one's own will.

Mother Mary of the Queen of the Apostles says: "Many times our Lord sends us affliction in order that we may learn not to afflict ourselves. When He sees that He has obtained from us what He desired and that through the means given us by Him we now rest in Him through the complete abandonment of self into His hands, He then grants us what we desire. There is nothing like never worrying about anything, for we possess Him who can do all things and who loves us so much that He attends to all our needs and rewards our abandonment into His hands by giving us much more than we could even desire."

Says another very experienced person:

Our Lord has a particular method of testing which He uses on those souls who would reach the perfection to which they are called. He does not ask activity, labor, or sacrifice, but He asks only voluntary accept-

nnce of whatever He sends them. The soul seldom sees the divine plan, hut it accepts wholeheartedly, in spite of humiliations, disdain, sacrifices, or anything else . . . the fulfillment of the will of God and nothing more. When God sees that the soul has this disposition, . . . He never demands the fulfillment of the sacrifice which is sought for, since the sacrifice has already been accepted wholeheartedly, God detains the soul and does not let it proceed any further with its work. God does not require the completion of the sacrifice, but perfect submission to His decrees.

"That which gladdens Me," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena *(Life,* I, 1l), "is not seeing you suffer, but seeing your will to endure it."

8. Those Who Are Falsely Devout

Grou, *Manuel,* p. *6:* "Nothing is more common than that pharisaical justice which is the capital enemy of all good souls. Those falsely just persons who crucified Christ continue to crucify Him daily in the persons of their faithful followers. As soon as a person truly abandons himself to God and dedicates himself to the interior life, he can be certain that he will draw upon himself first of all the envy and criticism and later the calumniations and persecutions of those who are falsely devout."

Blessed Raymond says of St. Catherine of Siena *(Life,* III, 6), that she was scarcely ever able to perform in public any exercise of piety without arousing calumny and drawing on herself persecution from those who should have defended and revered her. But he adds that no one should be astonished at this, for religious who have destroyed all self-love are bound to be victims of the most bitter envy by persons in the world, although this envy is often disguised.

The Process of Illumination, Union, and Transformation

Many are called to the paths of God to follow Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life; but few are numbered among those chosen or elect souls who follow Him to the point of illumination or total renewal. The reason for this fact is that those souls

arc very rare who remain steadfast in trials, who truly deny themselves and reduce their passions to silence. Yet this quality is necessary if they are to hear with profit to themselves the voice of the Redeemer, to understand clearly His words of eternal life, and to resolve sincerely to embrace their cross so that they can with all fidelity follow His bloody footprints.[48]

Fewer still arc those souls that prescind entirely from the deceit of human judgments and appearances and totally renounce their own tastes and affections in order to follow the inspirations and movements of the Holy Ghost with all docility. The few valiant souls that do deny themselves and, by total abandonment to the divine dispositions, accept with resignation the crosses which God sends them and remain steadfast in following Him who is the light of the world, although they may consider that they are groping in the dark and are half dead, do not walk in darkness, but possess the light of life. As they approach more closely to God, they are illumined and vivified and are protected against the power of death.[49]

By the very fact that they are much tempted and afflicted, they are at pains to maintain a careful watch over themselves and to pray unceasingly lest they fall into temptation. Their spirit is prepared for anything, however much their flesh is enfeebled.[50] When trials beset them, they pray more earnestly lest they weaken. In spite of all the aridity, temptations, and distaste which they experience in their prayers, and even though they are unable to meditate or read or arouse any affections, still they persevere in raising their eyes to heaven, whence their help must come.[51] This mute and insensible prayer which comes from the very depth of their tortured souls is most efficacious before Him who hears even the most secret desires of the heart. Souls that thus confide in Him will walk secure in all things under the shelter of His wings and they will emerge triumphant from every trial.

The faithful followers of Christ never abandon their customary

48 Matt. 10:38: "And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me." See also, *Dark Night of the Soul,* I, chap. 11; *The Living Flame,* canticle 2; *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 6.

48 Ps. 33:6; Mich. 7:8.

80 See Luke 22:43.

ei See Ps. 120:1.

prayer and, although they may have lost all light and sensible fervor, they prolong their prayer rather than abbreviate it. They are accustomed to remain before God with their loving gaze fixed steadfastly upon Him, never taking the eyes of their heart from Him even in the midst of great occupations. In the darkness and silence of all their faculties they begin to perceive a most delicate light which vivifies them, comforts them, and leads them in such a way that their hearts are always where their only treasure is. So they are continually loving and always listening to what the Lord speaks within them.[02] And it is precisely in order to speak to their hearts that He puts them in that mystical solitude.[03]

Like faithful sheep of Christ, they hear His voice and they know and follow Him, and He deigns to manifest Himself clearly to them when they are in danger.[04] At other times they sense His sweet presence although He does not disclose Himself to them, but their heart sees Him standing behind the wall and is captivated with love.[05]

Sometimes He passes through the darkness like a bright light which dissipates the shadows and discloses to them beauties never before known to mortals. He ravishes them with this beauty, although they must once more be enveloped in obscurity. Sometimes the illumination and attraction are so delicate and sudden that souls can explain nothing more than the salutary effects which they receive with those favors. On other occasions this illumination is so clear that it is impossible to doubt that it was His love and nothing else which so charmed and captivated them and at the same moment consoled, reanimated, and changed them entirely.

Thus the soul is encouraged to remain firm in its trials, for it sees how profitable they are, and it steadfastly resolves not to abandon prayer for any reason whatever. And when the soul, by means of that subtle light which was given it, finds itself again incapacitated for meditation and unable to arouse its tender affections as it did formerly, then it realizes its own nothingness and weakness. It understands now that the only thing it can and ought to do is to

[02] Ps. 84:9.
[03] Osee 2:14.
[04] John 10:27; 14:21.
[05] Cant. 2:9.

be acted upon and molded by the divine Artist. By this abandonment its disposes itself for whatever God wishes to work in it, without attempting to resist or disturb the mysterious and salutary divine operation by its own useless efforts.

Letting itself be carried along by the soft breathing of the Spirit, the soul begins to go out from itself "in darkness and secure" that it may ascend "by the secret ladder disguised." Then it sees that this scarcely perceptible spiritual light which attracted it is becoming brighter and that it increases in the measure that the soul quenches the light of the senses. The soul sees that the night of the senses is truly a light filled with pleasures.[56] In the darkness which formerly seemed so dreadful to the soul its only good was hidden from it; but now all the shadows have vanished in a moment, and night is turned into the clearest day wherein the Sun of justice deigns to show forth His splendors.

Then it is that the soul is illumined, renewed, and, as it were, transformed. It finds itself freed from the earthly attachments that formerly held it fast. Now it is entirely dispossessed of self and united with all its mind to that divine Beauty for whom it yearned so ardently. Filled with happiness and with an ineffable and most pure joy which have no counterpart in this world, the soul considers well spent all the labors and trials which have merited such a blessing for it. If there were any danger of losing all this for even a moment, the soul would not hesitate to undertake all the labors in the world to regain it. Now it understands how, for the good of the faithful, God attaches labor to His commandments [57] and that in reality His yoke is sweet and His burden light[58] for those who love Him.

The soul sees that the cross is its salvation and that its sufferings cannot be compared with the consolations which follow. Such sufferings are like the sleep of night wherein, in spite of the concomitant terrors, one's powers are restored; whereas the joys of the Lord are like the reality of day. When the soul awakes from its "sleep," it cannot help but admire and rejoice at the marvels God has worked in it. Therefore it blesses that happy night which

66 Ps. 138: ii.
67 Ps. 93:20.
58 Matt. 11:30.

brought it such blessings and it exclaims with St. John of the Cross: "Oh, night that guided me, Oh, night more lovely than the dawn, ( )h, night that joined Beloved with lover, Lover transformed in the beloved!" 59

But the soul's transformation is still very incomplete and almost entirely in the stages of first beginnings. The transformation thus far pertains almost solely to the intellect which, since it is the most healthy faculty we possess, is the first to be sufficiently purified so as to be captivated and possessed by God. It is illumined by being united to the divine Truth. Therefore, when the principal phases of active and passive purification have been passed, the intellect enters fully into the state of clear and distinct illumination, where formerly, in the night of the senses, it was very dark and confused. By means of this illumination, it is prepared for, initiated into, and begins to feel the mystical union and even to some extent, the deifying transformation.

The manifest illumination of the understanding, whereby the intellect remains absorbed in the contemplation of the divine Beauty and is possessed by it, is what constitutes the first grade of the mystical union. In other words, it is the first type of prayer in which the soul realizes clearly what has been infused into it supernaturally, and therefore it is called infused recollection. When the soul least suspects or least strives for them, it is favored with certain lights so lofty that it could never in its whole life attain them by its own powers, no matter how it might labor in its meditations. When the understanding is thus captivated, it is purified more and more by the lights it receives. In this way it is disposed to receive an illumination more intense and more frequent until finally its illumination will be almost ceaseless.

By these lights the will is attracted and purified so that it, too, is enraptured by the supreme Good and is united to God in the prayer of quiet, or what is called simply quietude. In this state the soul sweetly reposes on the object of its love and is consumed in the possession and love of the only one worthy of all its desires and affections. This is the second grade of mystical union.

Once the will is captive, little by little the sensitive faculties are attracted also. Formerly they were incapable of much good and

08 *Dark Night of the Soul,* prologue.

they sought only their respective objects, thereby molesting the soul or disturbing its repose, although they did not distract it to such an extent that they impeded it. But now the spiritual joy redounds even to these sensitive faculties and they, in their own way, are captured and subdued. Thus all the faculties of the soul come to a point where they are united with God and they feel the divine contact. Now the soul fully realizes that it is not itself that works, but God works in and through it. The soul recognizes that it no longer has any other desire nor does it actually desire anything but God. This is the third degree of the mystical union and, because of its excellence, it is called simply the prayer of union, because here the soul's entire activity is in full accord with the divine activity with which the soul seems to be identified.[60] This is the highest point attainable by the simple union of conformity, the conforming union of wills, which has not yet reached the innermost transformation.

When the conforming union is not very intense, the sensitive faculties are only stupefied, but their use is not altogether lost. They can still to some extent perceive their respective objects and even be engaged on them if the will permits. At times the intellect, too, accompanies the operations of the sense faculties, and therefore it is possible for a person to be occupied in holy works while his soul continues in the intimate union of wills. It is in this way that the contemplative life is joined to the active life.

When the conforming union is very intense, the sensitive faculties wither away because they cannot endure such light and such heat. The use of these faculties vanishes, and the body remains as if dead; therefore it does not impede the soul in its enjoyment of the ineffable delights which inundate it or the marvelous lights which are then communicated to it. This constitutes the full or ecstatic union whereby the soul is disposed to undergo the total renewal and transformation.

Here, amid ecstasies and raptures, is where the soul begins to feel those delicate divine touches which are so strong and penetrating that they hurt and wound most grievously in order to heal and re-

60 Sauvé, *Etats mystiques,* p. 71: "The soul is no longer divided, as formerly, between the will, which is pledged to God, and the intellect, the memory, and the imagination, which plagued the will with their distractions and movements. The soul is now completely united with Him in all its faculties. Hence, the name union, a union pure and simple, which is attributed to this state."

new the soul. These mysterious touches, with their consequent wounds of love, cause both life and death at once since they produce unbearable anguish together with an ineffable delight which is proper to glory. They are the touches of eternal life which destroy all that is earthly and make the soul die to the pleasures of the world in order to live a divine life in Christ. It could well be said of the souls that experience these things: "For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God." 81 Their life is now so exalted that no language can describe it. Many times they themselves do not fully realize the wonderful secrets which they feel and experience, to their great astonishment and self-contempt.02

Such souls come to realize clearly not only that God is working in them, but also that He is living in them, and this very intimately. It is not they who live now, but Jesus Christ lives in them. Therefore God becomes their all in all while they, completely annihilated, at once painfully and sweetly, and unable to describe or even to understand what is happening, perish in the abyss of the divine immensity.03

That this transformation may be complete, these souls must submit to another trial which is even more terrible and beyond compare with anything they have already endured. Each stage of illumination and union exacts new purgations the more beneficial as they are the more delicate and painful. The faithful soul accepts them all promptly, knowing the great profit that is to be found therein. In the midst of its sufferings, it abounds in joy. It desires nothing so much as to arrive at complete denial of self in order to become one with Christ in all the sacred mysteries of His life, passion, and death.

If up to this point the soul accompanied Christ in His passion, now, in order to pass from the simple conforming union to the transforming union, it must accompany Him in the very agony of the

·' Col. 3:3.

62 Mary of the Queen of the Apostles: "Death and life were given me at the same time for my happiness. Nothing and everything. What a contrast! I know not how to explain it. . . . It is both delight and suffering, but not like anything in this life. . . . This sensation without feeling, what language could express it?"

03 Mary of the Queen of the Apostles: "If I know not where I am, if my soul is lost in this annihilation, then what is there that I can say? If this cruel nothingness tills me with agony, if there is nothing to which it can be compared, then how can my tongue speak? Everything within is done by God, but He works in such a hidden manner that however much I may desire to speak of it, I cannot."

Cross. It must undergo the mystical death and burial with Him in order to merit the resurrection with Him to a new life, to ascend into heaven, and to see clearly the Light of God which no one can see without dying.[64] The soul suffers this death and burial during the night of the spirit where, in total abandonment by creatures and even by God Himself, it must endure the rooting out and destruction of the deepest inclinations of self-love and the last vestiges of the earthly man.

In that state the intellect suffers a terrible obscurity in the abyss of the great divine darkness. The will loses its absolute dominion, and the whole natural being is dispirited and annihilated that it may be refashioned. Nature is exasperated on seeing this horrible destruction. But when the soul, amid indescribable agony, dies to all things and is, as it were, annihilated, then it comes forth totally renewed and revivified. It becomes something entirely different, with a life, thoughts, and sentiments that are not human, but divine and proper to a son of God.

Such are the wonderful mysteries of the transforming union which begins in the mystical espousal and terminates in the mystical marriage wherein this union becomes stable and perpetual. In this latter state the soul, indissolubly united and made one with the incarnate Word, vividly bears His divine image and seems to be Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of the living God, living on earth. This is the ideal which is attainable by all truly Christian souls: the deifying transformation.

Many persons, as we have said, hold the supernatural in great aversion because they see it so disfigured and debased by certain authors. Yet, if these same persons would proceed in good faith and would not harden their hearts, it would suffice to see the supernatural order incarnate and living in privileged souls, to convince them of its divine beauty and to impel them to glorify the Father of lights from whom such magnificent gifts proceed. It would suffice also for them to hear those privileged souls speak the language of heaven, to see the graces which shine forth in them and especially that prodigious light by which, with no other books than the crucifix, such souls astonish and disconcert the greatest masters. It would suffice for them, finally, to converse with those privileged souls so

64 Exod. 33:20.

i liât, possessing a love for truth, they themselves may come to recognize the divine splendor and become inflamed with the zeal for God which devours the saintly souls.

When, through perfect fidelity to grace and complete resignation during the most difficult trials of the night of the spirit, the soul has arrived at that disposition of mind which is necessary for permanent union, then, through the celebration of an indissoluble marriage with the Word of God, it is permitted to live in perpetual fellowship with the three divine persons who continually disclose to the soul i heir infinite delights and thus entirely captivate it. Now the alternating phases of darkness and light totally disappear and, by means of that irrevocable pact and most excellent revelation, the soul is confirmed in grace and its salvation is assured. Indeed it enjoys even now, to a certain extent, the eternal Light. This Light does not weaken the soul as it did formerly, and instead of depriving it of the use of the senses, as happened when these were not yet purified, it st rengthens them so that they can operate perfectly and the soul can faithfully fulfill the ordinary duties of life even while it is engulfed in God. So it is that even in the midst of great labors, those who have reached this happy state preserve a more or less clear view of the I loly Trinity with whom they converse continually. Although their hands may be busily engaged in some work or other or their tongue may be speaking for the good of their neighbor, yet their heart is always in heaven. At every free moment they recollect themselves in order to enjoy a clearer vision. This vision, as we have said, does not cause them to neglect their obligations, for, even with- ‹ >ut thinking of them, they hasten to fulfill them at the proper time and with the utmost promptness and dexterity.

A similar facility for being occupied in exterior works without being distracted by them is usually acquired after the simple union. Indeed the soul sometimes enjoys a keener appreciation of the presence of God at such times than it would by praying in secret. Where formerly these souls lived a very secluded life through fear of their own weakness, they now feel impelled to sacrifice their sweet solitude in order to occupy themselves for the good of their neighbor.[68] I Ic who moves them to such activity, also preserves them from dissipation and danger.

[68] Cant. 5:2.

During the process of illumination and union a great many phenomena are evident; such as mystical sleep, spiritual intoxication, ecstasies, raptures, wounds of love, painful *fights of the spirit,* and so on. By these phenomena the soul is enlightened, fortified, renewed, and totally inflamed by the fire of charity. It is no longer able to contain its ardor and violent impulses. But when the soul is completely transformed and spiritualized, it receives other lofty communications, none of which pass to the exterior.[60]

Illumination is effected by a series of illustrations and inspirations by which the soul inadvertently and even instinctively learns the science of salvation. Many times these confused instructions are clarified by certain distinct supernatural words and visions, either sensible (when more suitable to the condition of the soul) or purely intellectual. By one way or other, God instructs the soul in all that it needs to know at the same time that He fills it with viemr and consolation. Thus the soul is animated and strengthened to proceed even in the midst of the greatest difficulties, for one divine word is sufficient to banish all fears as if by magic and to flood the soul with invincible fortitude. Therefore these favors, if well used and received with humility and disinterestedness, are most profitable and most worthy of our gratitude. Yet, at times, when these favors are sensible, the soul can easily abuse them by becoming too much at-

6,l Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* IV, 4, 1: "A soul which, by mortification, is thoroughly cured of its passions, and by purity of heart is established in a state of perfect health, is admitted to a wonderful knowledge of God, and discovers things so great, that it loses its power of acting through its senses. Hence proceed raptures and ecstasies, which indicate, however, by the impression which they produce in those who have them, that they are not altogether purified or accustomed to extraordinary graces; for in proportion as a soul purifies itself, the mind becomes stronger and more capable of bearing divine operations without emotion or suspension of the senses, as in the cases of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and certain other saints, whose minds were continually occupied with the most sublime contemplations, united with wonderful interior transports, but without there being anything apparent externally in the way of raptures and ecstasies."

Dark Night of the Soul, II, 1: The communications received by those who have not yet arrived at the transforming union "cannot be very strong or very intense or very spiritual, as is required for Divine union with God, by reason of the weakness and corruption of the sensual nature which has a part in them. Hence arise the raptures and trances and dislocations of the bones which always happen when the communications are not purely spiritual—that is, are not given to the spirit alone, as are those of the perfect who are purified by the second night of the spirit, and in whom these raptures and torments of the body no longer exist, since they are enjoying liberty of spirit, and their senses are now neither clouded nor transported."

cached to them and thus incapacitate itself for any profit or even expose itself to fall into lamentable illusions.

For that reason the purely intellectual communications are generally more desirable and more profitable because they do not lend themselves so easily to excessive attachment, vanity, or illusion. Without the noise of external or internal words and without the actual appearance of forms or figures, the intellect alone hears or sees with great clarity and distinctness certain truths which are so exalted that language cannot express them. These truths completely surpass all the truths portrayed by the symbols of human language.[67] The soul is greatly illumined by these communications and it even perceives material objects more faithfully than if it were to touch them or see them with its own eyes. Sometimes, by means of a single all-inclusive and most simple idea which it receives, the soul receives wisdom instantaneously. The intellectual communications, then, are more efficacious of themselves than are the sensible ones and they are also more certain, because neither nature nor the devil can produce them.

This is the way the sons of God are instructed, directed, comforted, and advised by God Himself. This is how the Spirit of truth, who dwells in such souls, inflames them and consumes them with divine love as He teaches them all truth.[68] In this way also does He

[67] *Dark Night of the Soul,* II, 17: "For, as that inward wisdom is so simple, so general and so spiritual that it has not entered into the understanding enwrapped or clad in any form or image subject to sense, it follows that sense and imagination . . . cannot account for it or imagine it, so as to say anything concerning it, although the soul be clearly aware that it is experiencing and partaking of that rare and delectable wisdom."

[68] Surin, *Catéchisme,* II, 7: "In the perfect life, God inflames souls with His love and shows them His essence and divine goodness in the center of their hearts and manifests His attributes to them. In this way He enkindles in them a blazing fire which sweetly consumes them. The heavenly Spouse desires to show them His beauty and His riches, touching them now with one, now with another. He thus shows them His various perfections: His power, His immensity, His majesty, His sweetness, and all the other excellences of His divine being. As a result the soul is so amazed and so consumed with love that it lives as if in a perpetual ecstasy. These touches of grace are so penetrating that they leave the soul perfectly instructed and taught by the Spouse Himself. The soul now knows, not by hearing, but by experience, how sweet is the Lord. At times the soul arrives at a state which is nothing less than a continual awareness of the goodness of God and an unceasing joy in His riches. This state the saints commonly call the spiritual nuptials."

"It is certain," writes Blessed Osanna *(Letters,* no. 2), "that when I was only six years of age God infused in my soul such a light that whatever I saw or heard was

give continual testimony that Jesus Christ is truth itself [69] and that this truth can be found only in His holy Church.

On seeing in the Church so many illiterate souls suddenly transformed by the prodigious light which they receive in contemplation and filled with a superior science by which they confound even the most learned men, who could sincerely deny that the finger of God is present there in some way? With the greatest facility, accuracy, and precision these souls speak of the most abstruse theological questions, although they have never studied theology and perhaps have never heeded such things. Meanwhile the greatest theologians, who have studied such matters all their life and are extremely careful in measuring their words, fall into confusion and inexactitude. Who is it that gives those souls such light and such marvelous assurance? [70]

What causes even more astonishment is to see the sublime powers which such souls possess and how they struggle with the impossible in attempting to express themselves when obedience commands

represented in my mind as God Himself, and this with such understanding, savor, affection, and divine sweetness, that frequently my spirit was totally absorbed in Christ. I became prompt and solicitous in holy prayer and meditation, in abstinences, vigils, penances, and works of piety, confessions, Communions, tears, and spiritual reading, without any human creature needed to teach me these things. . . . Once my soul was affected in such a manner that it saw a great brightness which was not that of the sun or of any ordinary light, and I knew who was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. O great God! there is no human language that can speak about or explain this."

The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, who was accustomed to spend long hours before the Blessed Sacrament, has said: "There I found tranquillity and the life of my soul. This intimate converse with our Lord made my life lightsome because I spoke to Him of everything and I asked His advice about everything, even the most minute things. He was my Lord and at the same time my friend and universal counsellor. Many graces did He grant me and some of them so extraordinary that I could scarcely believe them. The consolations with which He flooded my soul were such that I passed whole hours without even thinking of how or where I was. . . . Then did my most loving divine Spouse reveal to me His grandeur, holiness, omnipotence, justice, and mercy and the purity which He requires of souls who are consecrated to Him."

69 See John 6:45; 14:26; 15:26 f.; 16:13;! John 5:6.

70 *The Imitation of Christ,* III, 31: "There is a great difference between the wisdom of an illuminated and devout man and the knowledge of a learned and studious cleric. The doctrine which proceeds from above, from the divine influence, is much more noble than that which is laboriously acquired by human diligence."

Marin-Solâ, "Raciocinio y Progreso Dogmatico," *La Ciencia Tomista,* March, 1920, pp. 169 f.: "He who possesses sanctifying grace, together with the virtues and gifts, possesses and bears within himself, after the fashion of a nature, the very object from which the enunciations of faith proceed and concerning which they treat; that object from which flows all dogmatic progress. . . . The believer, and

i hem to say something about what they perceive in that abyss of the divine essence. They see the truth clearly; they know the truth, but i hey cannot express it. All known words are futile and even the loftiest expressions horrify them as if these expressions were blasphemous. Concepts increase, but the tongue is paralyzed. And when these souls see tbe impossibility of saying what in itself cannot be spoken, they have recourse to pure negation, saying: "This is nothing I hat we may imagine it to be, nor is it this or that. It is not even anyihing that we may suspect, and neither men nor angels can speak of it."

Blessed Angela of Foligno said that she would challenge anyone to try to express these things. The reality surpasses anything that one could think or say. It is ever new, yet ever changing; at all times admirable and unutterable. Contemplating this reality in •.ilence and loving it ineffably, they enjoy even now an anticipated glory.

Those who believe that the life of mystics is gloomy and sad, filled with sensible obscurities and strewn with crosses, do not know what lrue happiness is. Those very crosses, carried for love of Him who (i msecrated them by His Blood, are sweeter than all earthly delights.

iven more so the saint, possesses a new sense. . . . The gifts of wisdom, under- ' i.Hiding, and knowledge especially arc . . . second natures which are engrafted on ih.it which today we would call the subconsciousness of our being, and by means i>l them we are able to perceive, judge, and develop connaturally and intuitively . . . those supernatural truths which the speculative theologian in no way perceives . . . through study. ... So it frequently happens that, even before ' peculative theology has deduced or, indeed, even suspected a certain dogmatic con- I lusion or development, the holy soul . . . will already have sensed and seen that conclusion."

l ather Marin-Sola proves this statement by numerous texts which he cites from Si. Thomas wherein the latter explains how through the gift of wisdom one is able in judge most accurately by means of a certain connaturality, experience, and taste ill divine things. "Through the gift of wisdom a man is united to the highest causes .uni transformed into their likeness . . . and thus from within himself he judges oilier things" *(In ill Sent.,* dist. 34, q.i, a.2). "The gift of wisdom leads to a certain d. iform contemplation and it makes explicit the articles which faith holds obscurely in cording to the human mode of understanding" *(.ibid.,* dist. 35, a. l, sol. i, ad 1).

John of Jesus-Mary, Escuela de oraciôn, tr. 9, 8: "The theologian who realizes 1Il11 any man who is in the grace of God possesses many infused habits in the in- i< fleet which are inseparable from grace and which serve either for the penetration ol divine things ... or for divine contemplation, will have the basis of theological knowledge whereby he can judge that sublime interior knowledge and the divine ivors which the Lord communicates to pure souls through the most noble gift of wisdom which enlightens the intellect and inflames the will."

Those apparent obscurities which are encountered in the vestibule of the divine Light, become brighter and more exhilarating than any human light. The indescribable consolations and the wonderful illuminations that are interwoven amid the many trials and are more and more prolonged, can be compared to no earthly joy nor to all earthly joys together, for they are preludes to eternal glory.[71] Even to enjoy them for one moment, such souls would consider as well spent all the labors and privations which must be suffered in this life. The sorrows of the mystics are seasoned with joys so profound and indescribable that the soul would not trade these sorrows for any earthly consolation. Earthly suffering, on the other hand, is filled with unmitigated bitterness.[72] If the crosses which arc the lot of every soul are not carried out of love of Christ, there is nothing that can sweeten them. Likewise all joys that are not based upon God soon become bitter and terminate in weeping.[73]

The just man lives happy and consoled in the midst of his trials and sufferings, and in all his tribulations he abounds in joy. For he knows and in his own way feels and experiences that a momentary affliction can produce an immense increase of glory. Therefore, serene and joyful, he awaits death and looks upon it, not as a sorrowful dissolution, but as a true transfiguration; as the long-awaited manifestation of the glory of the sons of God. Until that time, glory is covered with the veil of mortal flesh. Precious to God is the death of His saints!

71 "If blind and sensual men," said St. Catherine of Siena during one of her ecstasies *(Life),* "could experience the delights of the charity with which Thou hast inflamed mv heart, they would no longer seek earthly pleasures, but, eager and thirsty, thev would hasten to quench their thirst in the fountain of Thy sweetness."

72 "Know thou, and sec that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God" (Jer. 2:19).

72 Palaphox, JAtrJw *de deseos,* Exhortation: "Since you must suffer in your temporal labors, make these works spiritual. Suffer for God, and then you will find hap,pincss. Whatever you suffer with a holy disposition is a crown; without that disposition, it is a torment. . . . What arc the afflictions of the spiritual life, but delights that do not pail? . . . The spiritual man does not consider his days more painful, but more delightful than the days of the lost and dissolute man. In the life of the spirit, suffering is not suffering, but joy."

APPENDIX

1. Continual and Unconscious Prayer

Grou, *Manuel,* pp. 224 f.:

It is a mistake to suppose that there is no prayer other than that explicit and formulated prayer which we are conscious of. And a person does not waste time when he is engaged in that type of prayer, even though he is unable to notice or feel anything. God, says David, hears the preparation of our heart. Even before our prayer is expressed in words or formulated in our thoughts, it is already in the presence of God because of the ardent desires of our will which as yet have not become the objects of our reflection. St. Anthony said that the best prayer is that which is made without any reflection. It is this excellent type of prayer that can be continued without interruption and without being vitiated by self-love.

Therefore unceasing prayer is not difficult. If it is rare, that is because many hearts are not well disposed and are not sufficiently generous and faithful so as to persevere in it. No one enters into this state of prayer until he has totally abandoned himself to God. However, a few souls thus give themselves without reserve, for in the very act of giving, there are usually some secret reservations of self-love which manifest themselves later. When the giving of self is complete and sincere, God rewards it immediately by giving Himself in return. He establishes Himself in the heart and there He fashions that continuous prayer which consists in peace, recollection, and attention to God within us, even in the midst of ordinary occupations. This recollection is sensible in the beginning; it is enjoyed and recognized. Later on, it becomes entirely spiritual and is possessed without one's sensing it, and if one should grieve at losing the former sweet awareness and consolation, that is because of self-love.

2. Artifices of Divine Love; Confident Abandonment and Sleep of the Faithful Soul

Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* III, 3:

The afflictions which the soul is made to endure are but loving artifices of God which will, one day, give it great joy. Souls that walk in light sing the canticles of the light; those that walk in darkness sing the songs of the darkness. . . . When God appears angry the soul trembles; w'hcn l le threatens it is terrified. The divine operation must be allowed to

develop, for, with the evil it carries a remedy; so continue to weep and to tremble; let restlessness and agony invade your souls, make no effort to free yourselves from these divine terrors, these heavenly troubles, but open your hearts to receive these little streams from that immense sea of sorrows which God bore in his most holy soul. So proceed in sorrow for as long as grace requires, and that same grace will gradually dry your tears. Darkness will disappear before the radiance of the sun, springtime will come with its flowers, and the result of your abandonment will be seen in the admirable beauty of the divine action. . . . It is at the moment of, and just after the awakening that holy souls, returning to themselves, and with full right to judge, can never tire of admiring and praising the tact, the inventions and refinements of loving deception practised by the divine Spouse. They understand how impenetrable are His ways, how impossible it is to guess His enigmas, to find out His disguises, or to receive consolation when it is His will to spread terror and alarm. . . .

The bride sleeps through the bustle of industries, and of human actions, and in spite of the sneers of sceptics. In her sleep she will sigh and tremble; in her dreams she will pursue and seek her Spouse, who disguises Himself to deceive her.

Let her dream; her fears are only born of the night, and of sleep. When the Spouse has exercised her beloved soul, and shown forth in it what can only be expressed by Him, He will develop the result of these dreams and will awaken it at the right time.

3. The Secret of Advancing Much in a Short Time

Tauler relates that when a certain holy lady was asked about the means by which she had arrived at such perfection, she humbly replied:

First, whenever I saw that I was seeking myself in anything, I immediately checked myself; secondly, I never defended myself against anything that was falsely said of me, but I made certain that I myself always spoke the truth; thirdly, I was always scrupulous in observing poverty and I denied myself all creature consolation; fourthly, I always fled from honors, but when any abuse came to me, I stood firm; fifthly, there never came to me any sufferings, sorrows, or trials but I desired greater ones, even when I judged myself undeserving of them; sixthly, I never disputed any light or truth infused in me by God, but I resigned myself to it and I never took complacence in the gifts themselves but only in the Giver of all things; seventhly, I continually impelled myself with great

love toward that supreme Good which is God; eighthlv, whenever I saw anyone do or say anything contrary to the truth, and saw the damage which was caused, I corrected and reproved these defects with pure love; ninthly, after having entered on the way of salvation, I never turned my eyes back to look at changeable creatures; tenthly, both within and without myself I have most strenuously practiced every virtue. I have lived both beneath heaven and in heaven, amid the angels and saints, like an upright man in his own family. As often as I recollect myself, I find within me the image of the sovereign Trinity and I realize that we are one with God. This knowledge is no less in me than the knowledge of my members.

And when some persons advised her to treat herself with less severity, so that her weakened body would not impede the spirit, she answered: "God does not permit it. . . . It is most right for me to follow my Lord Jesus Christ until death in all poverty, misery, hunger, thirst, cold, heat, suffering, and ignominy" *(Institutions,* chap.24).

"The end of perfection," Tauler continues in chapter 25, "is to unite the soul and all its potencies with God." Therefore, everyone must strive to eradicate from his soul any affection that would separate it from Him and thus, the soul must be preserved in true purity. The Christian must cleanse his imagination of vain fancies and lift his mind to contemplation. He must preserve his will from worldly cares and exercise it in fervent and holy acts of love for the supreme good. He should not be attached to any creature, and whatever kind of goods he may possess, whether spiritual or temporal,

let him maintain them in true poverty of spirit. In addition to this, let him keep his memory raised on high and fixed on that highest, essential, and uncreated Good in such wise that his whole soul and all its faculties and power's being recollected in God, he will be one spirit with Him and through divine affection he will sweetly sleep in the divine sweetness and in that intimate quiet he will hear what the Lord says to him. Then later, when he secs that God wishes to lead him to even more intimate and lofty things, leaving behind all his particular considerations and exercises, he will pass, in an excess of mind, to the obscurity of a learned silence. There he will be led more speedily by God to a realization of his own nothingness and a better understanding of creatures in that supersubstantial, unflagging, and paternal light in which God most truly

abides. . . . The principal reason why so few' arrive at this happy state is that they do not persevere in seeking it. The majority of them spend much time and effort with but little fruit. They pass many years uselessly without any spiritual profit whatever and miserably neglecting this incomparable good.

4. Compendium of the Spiritual Life

Henry Suso, *Union,* chap. 7:

Here, in a few words, are the steps through which the soul must pass to arrive at union with God. One must, above all, be purified of his vices and he must generously withdraw himself from all the pleasures of the w'orld, in order to attach himself to God by constant prayer, isolation from all creatures, and the pious exercises by which he continually subjects the flesh to the spirit. He must also offer himself generously and valiantly to the sorrows and innumerable trials which may come to him from God or creatures. Then, he must impress on his heart the passion of Christ crucified; he must engrave on his heart the sweetness of His evangelical precepts, His profound humility, and the purity of His life in order to love and imitate Him in these things.

It is only in the company of Jesus that the soul can progress rapidly and arrive at the unitive way. When it enters upon this way, it must cease all exterior activity, it must bury itself in peaceful silence and it must resign itself to God in all things in order to die entirely to self and its own desires and wish only for those things w hich give honor to Jesus Christ and His Father and to have the deepest affection for all men, be they friends or enemies. The soul which in the beginning w'as engaged in the active life and was fully absorbed in its exterior senses, leaves these operations and applies itself to interior activities by a simple contemplation in which the spirit little by little arrives at abandonment of the natural faculties of intellect and w'ill. Then it begins to experience a supernatural and divine assistance which leads it to a more elevated perfection. Its spirit is free of all self-love and all the natural activity of its intellect and w'ill.

In this perfect state the soul is freed of the weight of its imperfections and is raised by divine grace to an interior light where it incessantly enjoys an abundance of celestial consolations. It learns and understands with wisdom and executes with prudence all that reason and God command. Then the spirit is raised still more above time and space to a sweet and loving contemplation of God. This is not the highest state because the soul is as yet still distinct from God and it knows creatures in their

particular natures. He who knows how to extricate himself even more from self and to penetrate God even more intimately, experiences a divine rapture . . . through a superior grace which draws his created spirit to the Uncreated Spirit. . . .

In this condition the soul no longer knows forms, or images, or multiplicity. It finds itself in ignorance and forgetfulness of self and all creatures because now it neither secs nor understands nor feels anything other than God. Thus, without any effort it is attracted to God alone and is fused in Him through grace. It is elevated above self and absorbed and buried in the abyss of the divinity where it enjoys all the delights of beatitude. But, alas, all my words are nothing more than figures and images which are so disproportionate to this sublime, mysterious, and incomparable union that they differ from it as does the light of the sun from the darkness of niffht.

5. The Three Ways

Thomas of Jesus, *Tr. Oration Mental,* chap. 6: "For God to assimilate a soul to Himself, He first rids it of dissimilarities, which are sins, purging it by contrition; then I le makes it like to Himself, adorning it with the perfection of the virtues; and once it is made like to Himself, He unites and transforms it into Himself." In conformity with these three grades, St. Bonaventure mentions three operations of grace which he calls: strength of virtue; splendor of truth; and fervor of charity. To the purgative way pertain the purgation and perfecting of the senses; to the illuminative way, the purging and perfecting of reason; to the unitive way, the purging and perfecting of the spirit or mind, which is the superior part of the soul. The end of the purgative way is purity of heart; that of the illuminative way, truth; that of the unitive way, love. The purgative way is attributed to the Father, to whom is attributed power and justice; the illuminative way is attributed to the Son, first, because He is the Wisdom of the Father, and secondly, because this way consists principally in the imitation of Christ; the unitive way is attributed to the l loly Ghost, whose proper effect is the ardor and fire of charity. In the purgative way man understands himself; in the illuminative, he understands God; in the unitive, he strives to be united and transformed in God. All these exercises are reduced to three points, says St. Bonaventure: λλ ho is God? Who am I? How can we become united through love?

CHAPTER II

The Purgative Way

SSsSSSSsSSSsSSSSsSSSSsS

nothing (Gal. 6:3). Because of self-love we rely on our own knowledge, strength, and virtue without any more title to those things than our own ignorance, weakness, and misery. Further, self-love causes us to seek, unconsciously perhaps, our own selves, even when we think we are seeking only the glory of God.

Since God resists the proud and gives His grace only to the humble,[1] it follows that, because of our hidden presumption, we continually place obstacles to the loving action of the Holy Ghost, who seeks to raise a spiritual edifice on our "nothingness" by creating in us a pure heart and by re-creating us in Jesus Christ in good works. We need, then, to recognize our own nothingness so that He may become our all and fill our emptiness with His plenitude.[2] To hold ourselves in high esteem is to withdraw from Him even while He dwells in us, not only as our Comforter, but also as our Lord and Vivifier. Such action on our part grieves and oppresses Him, and our resistance makes Him abandon us. If He, the Spirit of truth who came to sanctify us in that truth which is the word of God,[3] is to dwell in us and work in our souls according to His pleasure, He must find our dwelling place free and empty. We shall empty ourselves by recognizing our own nothingness on which He, the fullness of being, must work, and by proceeding in all things according to that conviction.[4] Realizing that in the spiritual life we

1 See I Pet. 5:5; Jas. 4:6; Prov. 3:34.

2 St. Augustine, *Confessions,* IV, 12: "Descend that you may ascend and may ascend even to God, for you fall away from Him by rising against Him."

3 John 15:26; 17:17.

4 "You must know, My daughter," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena *(Life,* I, X), "what you are and what I am. . . . You are that which is not, and I am He who is. If your soul is permeated with this truth, the enemy will never ensnare you. You will triumph over all his wiles, you will do nothing contrary to My commandments, and you will readily acquire grace, truth, and peace."

"When the soul," says St. Catherine *(Letter* 46), "realizes that of itself it is nothing and that it works like one who is not when it does what is evil, then does it become humble before God and every other creature. Knowing that everything comes to it through the divine liberality, it is filled with such goodness and justice that, through love of Him and hatred of self, it seeks to take vengeance on itself and it desires also that all other creatures should do the same to it. . . . One who is submerged in this love no longer sees himself, or his sufferings, or adverts to the injuries that are done to him. He attends only to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Deeming himself unworthy of divine delights and consolations, when God visits him he says with St. Peter: 'Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.' Then Jesus Christ unites Himself more perfectly with that soul and makes it a fisher of men."

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visiones e instrueclones,* chap. 63: "It is on humility

can do absolutely nothing without Him who is our life and our strength and that with Him we can do all things, we should likewise realize the necessity of abandoning ourselves to Him without reserve. Doing that, we shall in no way resist His loving operation in us, but but we shall always cooperate with the fervor and energy which He communicates to us.

Therefore, when the soul begins to feel within itself an immense emptiness which cannot be filled by any created thing (because God alone can fill it), it then truly begins to abandon itself to the hands of the divine Guest. This spiritual emptiness is the point of departure for marvelous advances in the mystical life. Sincere humility is now a pledge of the love of God, for it is the image of His truth, the fruit of His Spirit of fear and knowledge and counsel and wisdom.[5] Thus this admirable virtue captivates and attracts the divine eyes.[6]

that you must build your foundations; and in it you must fix your roots, as members joined to the Head by a true and natural unity, if you wish to find peace for your souls. . . . The condition for peace is humility. . . . This humility is a marvelous and brilliant light which opens the eyes of the soul to its own nothingness and the immensity of God. The more you realize His immense goodness, the more will you understand your own nothingness; and the better you see your own nothingness and nudity, the greater the praise of the Ineffable which will resound in your hearts. Humility contemplates divine goodness and makes flow from God the graces which blossom forth into virtues. The first of these virtues is the love of God and of neighbor, and it is the light of humility which is the origin of that love. Perceiving its own nothingness and seeing how God inclines Himself toward such nothingness and unites Himself to it, the soul is inflamed, transformed, and it adores. . . . When I seek the source of this silence, I find it in that double abyss where the divine immensity is brought face to face with the nothingness of man. And the light of that double abyss is humility. Humility, light, silence; what way leads you to them except that one already indicated? You will attain it by prayer, by fervent, pure, and continuous prayer, by prayer which springs from the heart."

Indeed, it is in prayer that we know both ourselves and God. There we see what is lacking in our conformity with Him and we learn to ask Him for and truly to seek a remedy for our weakness. "He who knows what he lacks," says St. Augustine, "has already made great progress." So also St. Gregory the Great asserts that "the first step of progress consists in alienating ourselves from self in order to advance to God."

5 "Humility," says Ven. Mariana of Jesus, "is never foolishness, just as pride is never circumspect."

Gal. 6:3: "For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

6 *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap. 10: "I was wondering once why Our Lord so dearly loved this virtue of humility; and all of a sudden—without, I believe, my having previously thought of it—the following reason came into my mind: that is, because God is Sovereign Truth and to be humble is to walk in truth, for it is absolutely true to say that we have no good thing in ourselves, but only misery and nothingness; and anyone who fails to understand this is walking in falsehood. He who best understands it is most pleasing to Sovereign Truth because he is walking in truth."

Since perfect union with the divine will is the norm of our spiritual life and the sure guide of its progress, we ought to renounce all self-interest, personal advancement, human viewpoints, personal caprices, tastes, and comforts, and our own will. We must have no other desire, no other affection, no other wish than those of the divine will.7

He who has accomplished this much has already almost totally succeeded, for it is by this means that souls are possessed completely by the divine Spirit and receive wings of an eagle to fly without tiring, to soar high without falling away and without growing weary.8 The condition for not falling back in this path is simply to progress. The way not to become discouraged is to look ahead to what yet remains and not to look back on what has been accomplished. The way not to become fatigued is to press forward, doing violence to self without taking any rest along the way.

2. NECESSITY OF ABNEGATION AND MORTIFICATION

Not to progress is to fall back.9 Therefore, in addition to the abnegation of self-love by which we never view things according to

7 Hubv, *Maximes, spir.,* I: "One reaches God by self-annihilation. This will keep you so lowly that you will not find or even seek to find yourself. In the measure in which you strip yourself of all that is not God, you will be filled with God. . . . The practice of perfect self-annihilation consists in dying entirely to ourselves and to all our own proper activities in order to give place to God so that He may live and work in us. . . . O rich nothingness! The more a soul annihilates itself, the more precious does it become. . . . The less it possesses of things human, the more does it possess of the divine."

"When a man seeks himself," says the *Imitation* (III, 5), "then love falleth away."

8 Isa. 40:31: "But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* III, 2: "Consider well, My daughter, these words of the Holy Ghost," said the eternal Father to this saint. "They signify that on this ladder it is easier and less bothersome to run and fly with great speed than to walk slowly, because in the spiritual way there is nothing more tiring than heaviness and sloth. The grace of the Holy Ghost brooks no delay. As one of My servants (St. Ambrose) has said, 'The grace of the Holy Ghost knows no delay in the exertion of great effort.' . . . Those who run (and Oh, how rare they are!) are completely dead to self . . . and are in perfect conformity with My will. They find Me without even appearing to search for Me because all their affections are concentrated on Me..... The rapidity of an earthly race is in proportion to the vitality of the runner; but in the spiritual race the opposite is true, for the race is the swifter as the runner is more dead. But this death is true life which leads the runner to My bosom."

9 In this road toward God one must never be detained on any point, nor look back, nor consider that what has been traversed is sufficient to make one a perfect traveler. He who acts this way regresses, as happens to a boat which is going against the current. He who looks back at what has been accomplished will become listless

our own tastes and desires, we should strive to practice always the abnegation of our own will, realizing that the peak of perfection lies in doing all things in accordance with the divine will. In this way we shall advance with determination along the paths of God, not measuring difficulties or afflictions. He who always does the will of the heavenly Father will enter into and will be great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21; 12:50).

Since all our inclinations are opposed to the sacrifice of self-love and our own will (for all our inclinations are more or less disordered and vitiated), we must mortify and deny them all without exception. Any thread of the slightest attachment to self which remains in us and keeps us bound to earth is sufficient to keep us from soaring up into the heavens. If we do not break that thread, it may just as well be a rope. Hence we must mortify all our passions and inclinations which are manifestly disordered; we must exercise perpetual vigilance over the subjection of our internal and external senses; and, finally, we must make use of corporal austerities, which are so hateful to the worldly and so beloved by the saints.

How ardently the saints sought these austerities; crucifying their bodies with fastings, vigils, hairshirts, disciplines, and other rigors! With exquisite dexterity and dissimulation they succeeded in restraining the body, holding it in check by this rein of mortification, so that they never coveted anything contrary to the Spirit but were docile to Him in all things. They denied themselves even things that are lawful, as long as such things were not necessary for life or health, and by this means they conquered and dominated the body

and will forget the great distance which must yet be traveled. He who considers himself already perfect will fall away from that state in which he is, no matter how lofty.

"He who does not grow and advance," says St. Catherine of Siena (Letter 122), "declines and turns back." "The interior life," says Tauler *(Institutions,* chap. 34), "does not admit of repose or laziness." "The virtue of man here below," says Weiss *(Apol.,* X, 18), "has an object but not an end (Bernard, *Epist.,* 254, 2). Therefore no one is perfect if he does not desire to become more perfect. . . . The perfect wayfarers are those only who continually advance (St. Augustine, *Nat. et grat.,* 12, 13). Our perfection here on earth consists in continual progress. We must never stop. Nothing created remains the same. Only God can say: 'For I am the Lord, and I change not.' In us, however, change forms a part of our very nature (St. Augustine, *Nat. boni,* I; St. Thomas, la, q. 9, a. 2). We change, therefore, for better or for worse; either we advance or we retrogress. As soon as anyone stops advancing, he falls back" (St. Leo, *Serm.* 60, 8; St. Augustine, *Serm.* 169, 18; Ps. 69:18; St. Bernard, *Epist.,* 254, 4; 385, x; 35, 2).

so that it did not seek after those things which are unlawful. Thus the saints were purified, rectified, and confirmed in virtue at the same time that they offered to God a pleasing expiatory and propitiatory sacrifice. Their souls were tempered and refined in the furnace of suffering and they became worthy, holy, pleasing victims, capable of knowing by experience what is in each instance the holy will of God.[10] Therefore all the masters of the spiritual life advise that souls should never put themselves under a director who is opposed to corporal penances, because such a director will judge according to the flesh and not according to the spirit.[11]

It is true that external mortification is not the most essential nor must it always be used with the selfsame asperity. Since it is ordained to interior mortification, it should be applied in a measure that will contribute to the fomentation and growth of interior mortification and never in such a way that it will impede it. Therefore they do wrong who spend all their efforts in killing themselves with austerities as if by that means alone they can become perfect. What happens in such cases is that these very austerities become a pabulum of vanity, and souls are thus incapacitated for any good work. Thinking themselves better than anyone else, actually they are full of pride, impatience, and envy. As a result, instead of advancing, they fall back and become increasingly worse. Such is the state of

10 Wisd. 3:6–8: "As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them. . . . The just shall shine . . . They shall judge nations."

Bellamy, *La vie surnaturelle,* p. 11: "By means of suffering we naturally learn generosity and sacrifice, because it puts into play all the springs of the will after having repressed them. . . . Suffering tempers souls for the combats of life. In itself it is a test, although it can also be a chastisement. It perfects virtue at the same time that it expiates crime. To suppose, as Baius did, that it is necessarily of an expiatory character is to falsify its nature and its function."

11 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* III, 10: "The body that is purified by sufferings will not use pleasures except in perfect conformity with the divine will. Little by little the life of the senses will be eliminated and the imperfections which formerly accompanied one's eating, drinking, sleeping, working, and recreation will be replaced by a severe and absolute renunciation. When the soul arrives at its terminus, after having labored hard as a faithful servant (Matt. 25), it will manifest itself as a victim consumed by sacrifice. It will be transfigured by this continual immolation which identifies the soul as well as the body with the Victim of Calvary. It will be submerged, to a certain extent, in the Blood of the victim, which Blood itself was made to flow from mortification and was converted into a bath of innocence. It will tranquilly await that supreme hour in which it will be united to God forever, while the body in the tomb keeps watch for its happy resurrection."

those poor deluded ones who abandon the end for the means.[12]

Though these things are but means, they do not on that account cease to be ever indispensable, if well regulated, for obtaining the end. A weak or infirm body, a body well under control or oppressed with labors, will require much fewer austerities than an easy-going, robust, indomitable, or badly controlled body. Yet the few austerities performed can be so weak and spiritless that they frequently become an impediment or a source of vainglory. But as health permits and as there is need for it, we must all make use of austerities and even begin through them. He who does not subject an indomitable body will labor in vain to quiet the internal appetites whose unlawful tendencies are less perceptible but more difficult to dominate.[13]

Therefore all the saints, who judged according to the spirit, embraced austerities with great ardor. They were impelled to do so by that salutary fear which is the beginning of wisdom.[14] In penitential practices they saw a means of satisfying for past faults and of avoiding future ones, thus to prepare themselves for the divine union.[15] By means of austerities they began to conquer self, to purify and

12 St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 173: "God does not desire that penance be anything more than an instrument. I have seen many penitents who were neither patient nor obedient because they endeavored to kill the body but not the will. This is a result of indiscretion and the performance of penance according to their own will and not in conformity with the judgment of others. Imprudently, they wish to measure all bodies by the same measure, and if these others seek to depart from this measure, they resist them with harshness. Possessing such a perverse will, in the time of trial, temptation, or injury, they show themselves more flaccid than straw. All this, because in their mortifications they did not seek to restrain their passions."

13 Blessed Henry Suso, *Union,* chap. 2: "He who mortifies nature and keeps it within its lawful bounds will soon be able to rule it as he wishes and will be able to perform external works rightly and without vacillating. But he who dissipates himself on temporal things will never be able to do anything well. Purity and virtue perfect and enrich nature."

14 See Prov. 1:7; Ecclus. 1:16; Ps. 110:10.

15 The first grade of the purgative way, says Father Tomas of Jesus *(Tr. oration, ment.,* chap. 7), is to deplore one's own misery and to implore divine mercy; to have sorrow and repentance for past sins and to ask God's pardon. When contrition is perfect, there follows from it a profound knowledge and depreciation of self by which a man, "if he were able, would like to destroy himself in order to atone for his offenses against God. ... He treats himself as an enemy, not condoning anything in himself, whether his own tastes or pleasure or even his own honor, when it is not in accord with the divine law. He wages war on all things within himself, mortifying all his wicked and sinister inclinations." From this self-knowledge and depreciation follows the second grade or step, which is self-annihilation; and from this the third, which is love and gratitude to our Redeemer and an ardent desire to imitate Him, and by this the soul enters fully into the illuminative way.

rectify vitiated nature, to root out all evil habits, and to implant virtues in their place. In a word, they denied themselves all those things that are displeasing to God that they might perform more faithfully whatever is pleasing to Him, however difficult it may be. Living, not according to the tastes and pleasures of the world, but according to those of God, they dispose themselves to foster the growth of the supernatural life as much as possible rather than to smother it. As they realized more and more clearly how much their faults and imperfections displeased God, they were the more inflamed with an ardent desire to appease divine justice. With their own hands they took vengeance on faults committed and they offered themselves as an expiatory sacrifice to make amends to the supreme Goodness. So, in the measure that their love increased, new desires were born to make reparation for their weak cooperation with the Beloved and to suppress completely anything that might cause them to offend him again.[16]

If lowly souls have not yet received sufficient lights of counsel and discretion, are, because of this burning desire, prone to go to extremes in austerities and thereby gravely injure their health and render themselves incapable of anything else. This will happen even more readily if such souls seek to carry out penitential practices without being attentive to the obedience which should moderate them.[17] But

16 St. Catherine of Siena, *Life,* I, io: "The love of God naturally engenders a hatred for sin. When the soul perceives the germ of sin in its sensitive faculties and even that it has its roots there, it cannot help but hate it and exert itself, not to destroy the sensitive powers, but to annihilate the vice that is in them. But the soul cannot do this without great labors and mortifications. . . . O my sons! acquire this holy hatred of self. . . . This hatred will make you humble; it will give you patience in your labors, moderation in your prosperity, circumspection in your conduct. It will make you beloved by God and men. . . . Unfortunate is the soul that does not possess this holy hatred! For where it does not reign, there is, instead, the reign of self-love which is the cause of all sin and the source of all vices!"

17 St. Brigid *(Revelations,* IV, 2) received the following counsels from the lips of the virgin and martyr, St. Inez: "Be faithful; do not retrogress and do not advance more than is fitting to your state. In the desire to imitate others, you must not attempt to do that which surpasses your power, for God wishes you to observe moderation and discretion in all things. The enemy will sometimes suggest that you fast more than you are able or that you aspire to the impossible so that, prompted through shame to continue that which was badly begun, you will the more quickly fail through your own weakness. Heed the advice of those who possess fear of the Lord and then you will not seek to pass for what you are not nor covet those things which you are unable to do. Some souls fall into the error of thinking that by their own powers they can attain heaven and that by their own works they can worthily atone for their sins."

if souls are faithful and docile, they will quickly acquire the necessary prudence and will realize that God commands us to mortify ourselves, not to kill ourselves but to vivify ourselves, destroying the seeds of corruption and death and renewing the seeds of life. For that reason such souls much prefer interior mortification because, besides not occasioning dangers to health or being a source of vanity, everything in it is an aid to spiritual renewal.[18]

3. THE FRUITS OF ACTIVE PURGATION

When the soul has reached the stage of renewal wherein it experiences a change of life, mortification of its interior and exterior senses, and renunciation of all worldly vanities; when it has conquered self by mortification and the sincere acceptance of its cross whereon it crucifies every sinful inclination and the whole body of sin in order truly to follow Christ; it begins to taste the fruits of these first victories. It experiences such fervor, consolation, sweetness, and delight that they render insipid and bitter all earthly fruits. The reason for this is that, in order the better to extricate the soul from the things of earth, "the Father of mercies and the God of all consolations" treats it like a delicate child and draws it to Himself with the gentle bonds of a tender and delightful love. For when the soul tastes the exquisite savor of the things of God, it will have nothing but loathing, repugnance, disgust, and horror for all mundane tastes.[19]

Like a little child caressed by God, the soul then begins to see to some extent and to feel through experience how truly happy are the poor in spirit, who have their treasure and their heart in God alone; the meek, who, after the fashion of the divine Master, strive to subject themselves and be masters of self; the peacemakers, who receive the peace sent from heaven, a peace wherein the Holy Ghost abides, testifying to them that they are the sons of God; the merciful, who

18 Rom. 8:2: "For the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death."

19 St. Augustine, *Confessions,* IX, 1: "How delightful did it instantly become for me to lack the delights of vanities! It became a joy to me to be deprived of those very things which formerly I had feared to lose. Thou, O true and supreme Delight, didst cast them from me; Thou didst cast them forth and in their place Thou didst enter in, more sweet than any other pleasure. . . . Then was my mind freed from gnawing cares . . . and childlike, I prattled to Thee, my light, my wealth, my salvation, my Lord and my God."

find the divine mercy; those who hunger and thirst after justice, who are satiated in the fountain of divine life which makes all other things bitter;[20] those who weep and suffer unjust persecution, for they now receive the consolations of the kingdom; and especially the pure of heart, because, seeing God, they lack nothing. If worldly souls would but know how delicious are the fruits of the cross and how sweet it is to taste in secret the divine gift! How quickly they would abandon their miserable pastimes and how they would hasten to exchange these for the inestimable treasures hidden in the beatitudes!

4. THE WAY OF THE CROSS

That this happiness may be lasting and continually perfected and increased, it is necessary to understand once and for all and faithfully to put into practice the basic and all-embracing lesson of the followers of Christ: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." [21] In this continual self-denial for the purpose of following the motions of the Spirit of Jesus in all things which perfect docility is contained all progress in the spiritual life. He who is faithful in this self-denial will make great advances in a short time. But he who is not faithful, however much he may labor in great tasks, will proceed very slowly, if indeed he does not remain stationary or even retrogress. The *Imitation of Christ* contains this same teaching: "The progress that thou shalt make will be in proportion to the violence done to self." He who never does violence to self cannot, because of the enormity of his own weakness, avoid falling.[22]

[20] John 4:13 f.: "Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever; but the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life everlasting."

[21] Luke 9:2}.

[22] *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, 7: "I would, then, that I could convince spiritual persons that this road to God consists not in a multiplicity of meditations nor in ways or methods of such, nor in consolations, although these things may in their own way be necessary to beginners; but that it consists only in the one thing that is needful, which is the ability to deny oneself truly, according to that which is without and to that which is within, giving oneself up to suffering for Christ's sake, and to total annihilation. For the soul that thus denies itself will achieve this suffering and annihilation, and more also, and will likewise find more than suffering and annihilation therein. And if a soul be found wanting in this exercise, which is the sum and root of the virtues, all its other methods are so much wandering about in

On the other hand, according as we do violence to ourselves to correct our imperfections, we shall place ourselves in the hands of the divine Spirit so that He may work in us according to I lis own good pleasure and may bring to abundant fruition in us all manner of virtues and good works. Our rectitude and purity of intention will be of the same measure as our abnegation. The intensity of our self-abnegation will likewise determine the degree in which we "walk worthy of the vocation in which [we] are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit; . . . that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . . but doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ: 23 from whom the whole body . . . maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity. . . . [Thus are we] renewed in the spirit of [our] mind:

a maze, and profiting not at all, although its meditations and communications may be as lofty as those of the angels. For progress comes not save through the imitation of Christ."

St. Augustine, *Manual,* chap. 16: "The kingdom of heaven suffers the violence of being conquered by our good works. ... It demands nothing less precious than yourself; and whatever you arc, that is what it must cost you. . . . Christ delivered Himself up in order to conquer you and to win you for the kingdom of God the Father ... so you also ought to abandon yourself to God so that vou may be His kingdom; so that sin will not reign in your mortal body, but the Spirit of rhe Lord."

Taulcr, *Institutions,* chap. 14: "As you separate yourself from all things, so in that measure, and no more or no less, will God abide with all His riches in the depth of your soul. But if vou dwell in yourself, then God will live apart from you. Whatever you have or whatever you can possess, dispose of it by means of your abnegation. In that wav and in no other will you enjoy true peace."

Imitation: "Aly son, you must give all for all and keep nothing of thv own" (III, 27). "You cannot possess perfect liberty unless you deny yourself wholly" (III, 32).

"Make the firm resolution," says La Figucra *(Sttnia espiritual,* III, 1), "of taking the bitter as sweet and the sweet as bitter and then vou will see what great peace you will possess." "It is necessary," says Ven. Sister Barbara (*Vida,* p. 445), "to hate self in order to be loved better; to blind oneself in order to sec better; to renounce liberty to gain freedom; to abandon riches to become rich; to suffer to avoid pain; to wage constant w ar in order to live in peace."

23Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* III, 1, art. 2: "The shortest and the surest way of attaining to perfection, is to study purity of heart rather than the exercise of the virtues, because God is ready to bestow all manner of graces upon us, provided we put no obstacles in their way. Now it is by purifying our heart that we clear away everything which hinders the work of God. When all impediments are removed, it is inconceivable what wonderful effects God produces in the soul."

and [we] put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4:1-24, *passim*).

It is in this wray that we hasten along the path to evangelical perfection, ascending from virtue to virtue, to become perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect and to be able to see God on His holy mountain. But this attainment demands extreme purity which we could never acquire even with all our own powers. It must be produced in us by the fire of the Spirit of renewal.

APPENDIX

1. Annihilation and Increase

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* IV, 23:

Humility is like a magnet by which the soul attracts God to itself. When God sees that the soul's knowledge of its own nothingness makes it lose its own being, so to speak, He communicates to it a most noble and most perfect being; a being, in a certain sense, without beginning or end, a being entirely divine which, as Thou hast said, O Lord, is none other than Thy own. He who is united to God is made one spirit with Him; not, certainly, by an identity of nature, but by the union of wills. The soul united thus to Thee has no other knowledge and no other will than Thy own. It works with Thee without perceiving that it works also in itself so that everything the soul does seems to it to come from Thee rather than from itself, although Thy concursus puts it into action. But its workings belong more to Thee than to the soul itself because Thou art its beginning, its middle, and its end. It is Thy grace and Thy love which principally work in the soul, but never without the soul. When the soul reaches this degree of humility it is content with its own nothingness which Thou dost increase to make it Thy habitual mansion. But the soul that does not possess this annihilation cannot aspire to the divine union, for since God is essentially happy in Himself and is in need of nothing, if He were to be united to a soul which is not totally annihilated, He would seem to have a need for something. In the creation of the universe, God worked with nothing, and that nothingness was supplanted by creatures to which He desired to unite Himself, giving them being and a participation in Himself, according to their capacities. In the same way, if He is to unite Himself anew with a soul and bestow His

favors upon it, it is necessary that Lie find in that soul nothingness. . . . God is so pleased with a soul thus annihilated that He remains continually united to it and by this union He communicates His divine perfections to it as far as the creature is capable.

St. Catherine of Siena, *Life,* I, io:

The soul which perceives its own nothingness and realizes that all its good is in its Creator, abandons itself to Elim so perfectly and so submerges itself in God that all its activity is directed by Him and exercised on Him. This union of love, which increases from day to day, transforms the soul into God in such a way that it can have no other thoughts, no other desires, no other love but His. It loses all recollection of self and sees nothing but God. It takes no account of self or other creatures except in relation to Elim. . . . This is the lawful love which cannot mislead us because then the soul follows the divine will and desires nothing and does nothing outside of God.

2. Advantages of Annihilation and Abnegation

Blessed Henry Suso, *Union,* chap. 2: "He who wishes to gain all must annihilate himself and detach himself from self and all things. Happy the man who perseveres in this way! With what ease he will be raised to celestial things!" The same Blessed Suso says in his *Disciplina spiritualis, I:*

Who could ever explain the inestimable treasures which are contained in this intimate conviction of our own nothingness? . . . One year passed in this state of self-annihilation is of more value than fifty years of a religious life made dissipate and sterile because of the ignorance of self. Of what avail are penances, scourgings, fastings on bread and water, studies, pilgrimages, and all the other exterior works without this interior conviction that you *are not (non sum)'?* This is the quickest way to attain heaven.

Blosius, *Inst.,* chap. 2:

On this holy consideration and conviction of his own nothingness depends a man's whole sanctity. . . . Without the unceasing and diligent practice of mortification and abnegation it is impossible to advance in any way. In true and total mortification is found the true and joyful way. He who is continually dying to self is continually beginning to live a new life in God. Nothing more pleasing can be offered to God than

resignation of one's own will; else is more esteemed by men. . . . The soul will not perfectly perceive God in its depths until everything disorderly within it has perished. This mortification is indeed difficult and arduous in the beginning, but, if the soul perseveres in it manfully, then, with God's help, it becomes extremely easy and supremely delightful.

Grou, *Manuel,* p. 163:

The habit of self-denial and death to self becomes more and more easy and at the end of a certain period of time, one marvels at seeing that now there is hardly any effort, where formerly this practice seemed intolerable and terrifying. Our own pride is the reason why it is so difficult to bear with scorn, calumny, and humiliation. . . . Hence it is our pride that agitates us, makes us indignant, and renders our life bitter and unbearable. If we work seriously to annihilate self and give no heed to pride and self-love, but wholeheartedly accept the little contradictions we encounter, then little by little we shall cease to be disturbed by what is thought or said of us or the way we are treated.

Passive Purgation

Since we find that we are so seriously wounded and vitiated and since our evil is so extensive and deep-rooted that it penetrates the most intimate depths of our nature, it follows that all our mortifications and abnegations are not sufficient of themselves to "purge out the old leaven . . . of malice and wickedness" and convert us into "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." [24] Nor can they cure our vices, root out our evil inclinations, put in order all those things that are disordered, and restore us to our primitive rectitude and purity. In addition to our practice of mortifications we must abandon ourselves unreservedly to the divine action so that the fire of the Holy Ghost may purify and renew us to the extent that is necessary for perfect union with God.

The purgations we need most are those which will penetrate to the very depth of the soul and will reach everything within us that is unclean so that the disorder of sin can be entirely removed. These purgations must be as varied and as forceful as our evil inclinations are numerous and strong; they must be the more violent and painful as the seriousness and number of our own faults are greater; and,

[24] 1 Cor. 5:7 f.

finally, they must be so much the more probing and penetrating as the root of evil is the more profound. Since our evil inclinations and our lack of rectitude and purity are deeply rooted and hidden, our own efforts, diligence, mortifications, and every imaginable penance will not suffice nor can they ever suffice to re-establish in us that rectitude and purity and to root out those evil inclinations. We are still unable to realize the enormity of our evil and for that reason we cannot as yet discover an apt remedy for it.

It is readily seen, then, how far they have deviated from the truth who attempt by their own efforts and with reliance on no one else to re-establish right order and to arrive at perfection. What they succeed in doing is to augment their disorder by closing their eyes to evil and to be filled with presumption and haughtiness.

Even in those things which appear to us to be very pure, righteous, and holy, we are guilty of a thousand inadvertent imperfections which we could never discover without some superior light. Much less are we able to correct them, unless some superior power comes to our aid. Since nothing vitiated or stained can be joined to supreme purity, holiness, and justice, without degenerating, smothering, and being repugnant to it, to arrive at perfect union and divine perfection it is necessary that God Himself have a hand in the work of our purification and rehabilitation.

I. DIVERSITY AND ORDER OF PASSIVE PURGATIONS

All the mortifications and active purgations which we practice would serve us poorly indeed if God did not perfect and complete them with the passive purgations to which, in His mercy, He subjects us. These passive purgations reach down into the very depth of our soul and there they discover and correct innumerable faults and imperfections which we ourselves would never notice, much less remedy. God mercifully conceals such things from fervent souls so that they will not be overwhelmed or discouraged. He discloses these imperfections only by degrees and in the measure needful to purify souls and subject them to new trials.[25]

25 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* III, 8: "When permeated with the sentiments of pure love, the soul is so delicate and sensitive that it cannot tolerate even the shadow of a defect. The sight of the slightest imperfection is as insupportable to the soul as hell itself. Therefore, God hides from it the evil inclinations to which man is subject, for if the soul could see clearly the state of depravation to which sin

The passive purgations are divided into sensible and spiritual, according as they refer principally to the body and sensitive nature, subjecting it to reason, or to the depth of the soul and the rational life, subjecting it to the Spirit. The sensible purgations, in part, usually precede and accompany illumination, as illumination itself partly precedes and partly accompanies perfect union.[20] Spiritual purgations begin in full after the imperfect or conforming union and they always precede the perfect or transforming union of the mystical marriage. We should note that the three ways, called purgative, illuminative, and unitive, which are better called three phases or sections of the path to perfection, are not at all mutually exclusive. Rather they overlap and intermingle, although at each moment one of the three predominates.

2. PURITY OF HEART AND ILLUMINATION

Those who, with Rousseau, lament that God Himself did not deign to speak to them as He did to the prophets would certainly never have dreamed of the difficult trials to which those prophets had to subject themselves and be subjected in order to be able fruitfully to hear the voice of God.[26][27] No one can see God, or even hear His voice, unless he dies to self.[28]

To be illumined, a soul must advance toward God in sanctity and purity of life; to approach Him, one must remove one's shoes as Moses did; that is, rid oneself of base affections for the world. But it is not enough to be purged of the gross inclinations of the "animal man." To hear the voice of God in the depth of our conscience and

had reduced it, it would become discouraged. God makes known to the soul its weaknesses not all at once, but one at a time and the horror which they excite in the light of divine justice makes the soul cry out many times with the Psalmist: 'Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: look down, O Lord, to help me* (Ps. 39:14). If they believed that they had contracted the slightest stain, even involuntarily, they would never tire of purifying themselves with the most austere penances."

26 Weiss, *Apologie,* X, 18: "The illumination which we are treating here is not only that of the intellect, but that of the whole man." Sin constitutes darkness, properly so called, and true light is the light of justice. 1 le who is separated from God cannot know himself, nor can he know the path which leads to peace; and as long as he does not advance toward God, he remains in darkness (St. Gregory the Great, *Moralia,* V, izf.; XI, 58; XXIX, 32). The more our charity increases, the more also do the lights of our intellect increase (St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio,* 4°, S).

27 See Wisd. 1:3-5.

28 See Exod. 33:20.

to receive the divine lights as we ought, we need the utmost recollection and attention and a superhuman simplicity and purity.[29] God carries the soul to solitude in order to speak to its heart[30] and the soul must be altogether pure and simple, recollected and attentive, if it is to hear and understand the divine language. It must flee from the mundane noise of creatures, from all tumult of the passions and vain worldly cares and even from itself, by stripping its imagination and memory of all human recollection and thought, if it wishes to perceive that soft whisper of the divine Spirit who speaks to us the word spoken in private.[31] At the same time the soul must have a right intention, and its eyes must be so clean and candid that everything is transparent to it. There must not be the slightest duplicity which causes the soul to fall back upon itself and attribute to itself anything that God speaks and works in it. This would be to have an evil eye, the *oculus nequam* of self-love which vitiates and perverts everything, making all things dark,[32] whereas with a simple eye, all things are illuminated.[33]

The profound recollection and the extreme purity, rectitude, and simplicity which are necessary if we are to be inundated in the divine light and able to recognize our imperfections, can only be the work of God in us. He alone, possessing those perfections by His essence, can communicate them to us in the required measure.[34]

29 *Imitation of Christ,* Bk. II, chap. 4: "Simplicity must be in the intention; purity in the affection. Simplicity tends to God; purity clasps Him and tastes Him. . . . If your heart be right, then every creature will be to you a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine. . . . A pure heart pierces heaven and hell."

80 Osee 2:14.

81 Job 4:12.

82 Once St. Catherine of Siena asked the Lord why He no longer familiarly communicated with men and He answered that it was because men no longer possess sufficient simplicity. Instead, they appropriate to themselves the lights and gifts which He has given them. Instead of listening to Him, their Master, they want Him to listen to them as a disciple.

83 See Matt. 6:22!.; Luke 11:34-36 Without perfect simplicity and sincerity in all things it is impossible to advance in the ways of the Lord. The Spirit of Wisdom flees from the least deception (Wisd. 1:5), and He communicates His secrets only to the simple (Prov. 3:32; 11:20). Therefore, "he that walketh sincerely, walketh confidently" *(ibid.,* 10:9; 28:18); but he whose "heart is divided . . . shall perish" (Osee 10:2). "A double minded man is inconstant in all his ways" (Jas. 1:8), but "the simplicity of the just shall guide them" (Prov. 11:3).

84 "The soul desirous of possessing purity," said our Lord to St. Magdalen of Pazzi *(Œuvres,* II, 15), "must be totally dead and separated from self. It must have no understanding, knowledge, or will of its own; that is, it must not understand or

By means of that communicated light, the soul discovers that of itself it is nothing but an abyss of evil, of nothingness, obscurity and miseries, and that if it possesses anything of good, it is all due to the divine mercy. The soul is then inflamed with the lively desire of being united forever with that supreme Good who is the source of all perfections and who contains in Himself all the treasures of light and goodness, of wisdom and beauty. At the same time the soul sees itself full of countless faults and imperfections which formerly it did not perceive or which may have seemed to it to be very insignificant, simply because it did not have eyes to see them or because they were small only in comparison with what we term grave faults. Yet in themselves these faults are truly enormous in the presence of infinite holiness and they cannot but impede that union which is so much desired. The soul sees itself filled with personal views and self-interest; and all its intentions, however pure, simple, and sincere they may appear, are unconsciously enveloped in the deceits of self-love.

The soul now realizes that to acquire absolute simplicity and to be sufficiently purified so that it can be united with absolute sanctity and justice, a terrible purgation is necessary, either in this life or in the next.[35] The ardent eagerness of the soul to be united with God at once and to be freed from the miseries that afflict it and of the defects which are so displeasing to God, makes the soul exclaim with fervor: "Prove me, O Lord, and try me; burn

know or wish to know anything but what I wish. It must completely lose its own being and be reclothed, as much as is possible, in Mine. It must die to self to live only in Me who am its Creator and its God. Souls of this type are rightly called angels on earth because of their great purity, for they possess this virtue in the most perfect and most sublime degree that it is possible to attain in this life."

85 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chap. 8: "God enabled me to see that on His part, He never closes the gates of heaven to anyone and all those who desire to enter, do enter ... ; but His divine Essence is of so great a puritv and so incomprehensible that the soul which has within itself the slightest speck of imperfection would rather be cast into a thousand hells than be presented before such holy majesty. Therefore, seeing that Purgatory was established by God for the purification of souls of their stains, the soul is happy to be placed therein and it deems it the greatest mercy to find that means of destroying the obstacle which prevents it from flinging itself into the divine embrace. Purgatory is such a state that no human tongue can fittingly speak of it, nor can any spirit comprehend it. I know only that in its intensity of suffering it is equal to hell itself and yet any soul that has the slightest stain accepts this suffering as a great act of God's mercy and it reckons as nothing all that it suffers when compared to the sorrow caused by those stains which prevent it from following the impulses of its love."

my reins and my heart. And see if there be in me the way of iniquity: and lead me in the eternal way." 38 Thus the soul joyfully submits to all the trials which the heavenly Father sends it. And if, in the midst of these trials, it finds itself weakening, then it tries to resign itself, to have recourse to prayer, and to say: "Thy will, not mine, be done. Hallowed be Thy blessed name. I hy kingdom come."

Taking courage and being inflamed with new desires of purification, it says: "Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." 37 "Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow." 38 "Create a clean heart in me and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from Thy face; and take not Thy holy spirit from me." 39 The soul sees, as did St. Catherine of Siena, that we cannot have fire without blood, nor blood without fire.40 That is, we cannot have ardent charity without the spirit of sacrifice, nor can we have true abnegation without fervent charity. To be filled with a love which is as strong as death and which destroys all servile fear, one needs to be permeated with the consideration and imitation of the sufferings of Christ whose precious blood blotted out our iniquities, reconciled us to God, and gave us the power to triumph over all our enemies.41

36Ps. 25:2; 138:23 f.
37 Ps. 50:4.
38 Ps. 50:9.
39 Ps. 50:12 f.
40 Letter 52.
41 St. Catherine of Siena, *Letters:* "God re-created us through grace in His Blood. In that Blood we find the font of His mercy; in that Blood, clemency; in that Blood, fire; and in that Blood, piety. By that Blood is justice rendered for our sins, by that Blood is our hardness softened. Bitter things are made sweet and the greatest and heaviest of burdens are made light. Since virtues are matured in this Blood, the soul is inebriated and inundated in this Blood for the honor of God" (Letter 57).

When we have been "inflamed with the love of virtue, we desire to give blood for Blood and life for Life. By virtue of this Blood all our iniquities will be destroyed and removed and there is nothing that can then impede or destroy our joy. This Blood will enable us to bear and suffer all pains with holy patience until, like St. Paul, we glory in our tribulations, desiring to be conformed with Christ crucified and to put on His opprobrium for the honor of God and the salvation of souls. O how happy is that soul which sweetly passes over this tempestuous sea and the afflictions of the world with vigilance, humility, and constant prayer, inflamed with fire, inebriated with holy desires, and submerged in the Blood of Christ crucified! Through this Blood we shall receive at the end of our life the fruit of our labors. This Blood removes all suffering and gives delight; it deprives man of self and makes him approach to God. ... In that state, man does not feel fatigue because he is dead to self-will and even in this life he enjoys the pledge and glory of

Before the soul arrives at these ardent longings and these pure and fervent desires for new purgations, which are terrible and very painful, it must first be comforted and purified by lights, rewards, consolations, and sensible fervors proportionate to its habitual state. As yet it is not in a position to experience those lights which are entirely spiritual. The soul must also take great pains to secure purity of heart so that, through the salutary bathing in that blood which purifies, invigorates, and renews, its palate will be rectified in such a way that it will be able to appreciate the sweetness of the Cross. Thus, more and more it gains a taste for things divine and an aversion for the things of earth. The eyes of its understanding are enlightened to discover and admire the divine wonders and the infinite treasures of the knowledge and wisdom which are hidden in Jesus Christ.[42]

eternity. He possesses peace and quiet because he has rid himself of the enemy who wages constant war. Hence, we should constantly be mindful of that Blood which flowed with the fire of love. . . . The soul then enjoys here on earth eternal life. It sees that it has received, not by any right, but through grace, the life of the Blood, by conforming its will with the sweet will of God" (Letter 58).

"I desire that you be submerged in the Blood of the Son of God and inflamed with the fire of divine charity, for here ail servile fear is lost and there remains only reverential fear. What can the devil, the world and its slaves do to one who possesses this love without measure which has as its object the Blood of Christ crucified? Nothing, surely. Rather, those things are instruments to test and increase our virtue. . . . Seeking pain, the soul finds delight; seeking delight, it finds pain. It is far better for us to be inundated in the Blood of Christ and in It to kill, without any mercy, our perverse wills and thus preserve a free heart before God. Then will our joy be increased and we shall labor without tiring. We shall feel no suffering at any obedience that is placed on us, but only delight, for nothing can then separate us from Christ. Rather, obedience then makes us acquire patience and hasten more quickly to embrace the Cross. . . . O how delightful it would be to be persecuted for Christ crucified! In this do I wish you to find your delight: in whatever way that God shall send you crosses and sufferings, not to select them according to your own good pleasure, but according to the manner and pleasure of Him who sends them to you. This is the way which the saints followed" (Letter 60).

42 See Col. 2:2-3; Eph. 1:17-20; 3:19.

St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 65: "O glorious Blood which gives us life, which makes the invisible visible, which manifests to us the divine mercy, washing away the sin of disobedience by the obedience of the Word of God!"

Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom,* chaps. 1, 2, 3, *passim:* "If you wish to know and contemplate My Divinity, begin now to know and love Me in the torments of My sorrowful Passion. . . . No one can attain to the grandeurs of My Divinity, save through the humiliations of My humanity. He who thinks to elevate himself without the aid of My Blood, no matter how great his powers, falls most miserably into the darkness of ignorance. The luminous gate which you seek is My blood-stained humanity. . . . Do not fear that you will faint along the way of Aly Cross. To him who loves God wholeheartedly, the Cross seems so light, so easy, so bear-

3. THE PEACE OF THE SONS OF GOD

When, through exterior and interior mortification, perpetual guard over the senses, and vigilance over its most intimate movements and affections, the soul seems already to have gained control of the passions which enslave us and when God Himself is comforting and purifying the soul with certain lights and sensible fervors, then, as has been said, the soul is almost led to believe that it has accomplished everything and has at last arrived at true perfection. It begins to experience to some degree the ineffable delights of the peace and glorious liberty of the sons of God. It has learned through experience that this liberty consists precisely in breaking the bonds of the passions and of conforming to the infallible norm of righteousness, which is the divine will. Filled with joy, it exclaims with St. Augustine: "To serve God is to reign."

In this happy peace which just souls enjoy, they live now as true citizens of the peaceful kingdom wherein God treats them as His blessed sons, heaping favors upon them and desiring to give them joy. "He will do the will of them that fear Him: and He will hear their prayer." Their very penances and austerities become tasteful by reason of the sweet consolations they bring and the loving and fervent longings they awaken. Each time they conquer self out of love of God, they enjoy the fruit of the most difficult victory, which is supremacy over self. For each obstacle which they remove, the divine Paraclete enkindles in them new flames of charity [43] and proposes in their hearts the steps of firm resolutions by

able that he is never tempted to abandon it. No one is so comforted as he who shares My Cross, for My delights are poured forth in abundance on the soul that drinks of the chalice of My bitterness. If the bark is rough, the fruit is delicious and one does not notice the suffering, when one thinks of the reward. . . . He who begins to fight with Me, is already almost victorious."

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visions,* chap. 47: " 'I am He who takes away the sins of the world. . . . This Blood which you see is the bath of true purification... . . This Heart is your true dwelling place. Do not fear, My sons, to manifest by word and action this truth of My way and My life which the evil ones fight against, for I shall always be with you to aid and succour you.' ... I saw that this purification had three grades: the easy avoidance of evil, the joyful practice of good, and the ultimate transformation of the soul in God. In each grade the soul receives a singular beauty. The beauty of the third grade, however, is ineffable. It can only be said that the soul is lost from view in the pure abyss which is Jesus Christ and all that can be seen is Him, either suffering or being glorified in the soul."

[43] *Dark Night of the Soul,* I, chap. 11: "This enkindling of love is not as a rule felt at first, ... by reason of the impurity of human nature. . . .Yet sometimes, nev-

which, with new and more ardent longings and renewed strength, they ascend from virtue to virtue until they see God in Sion.[44]

Then when they behold the works of the Lord and the wonders He has done upon the earth,[45] tasting and knowing by experience how sweet is the Lord, they will understand only that man is blessed who hopes in Him.[46] Holding in horror all the pleasures of the world, which formerly seemed so pleasant to them, they find their delight in searching for the one and only Beloved and faithful Lover of their souls who purifies them and beautifies

ertheless, there soon begins to make itself felt a certain yearning toward God; and the more this increases, the more is the soul affectioned, and enkindled in love toward God, without knowing or understanding how and whence this love and affection came to it, but from time to time seeing this flame and this enkindling grow so greatly within it that it desires God with yearning of love; even as David, . . . said of himself in these words, namely: Because my heart was enkindled . . . my reins also were changed: that is, my desires for sensual affections were changed. . . . And I, he says, was dissolved in nothing and annihilated, and I knew not; for, as we have said, without knowing the way whereby it goes, the soul finds itself annihilated with respect to all things above and below which were accustomed to please it; and it finds itself enamoured, without knowing how. And because at times the enkindling of love in the spirit grows greater, the yearnings for God become so great in the soul that the very bones seem to be dried up by this thirst. . . . This thirst David had and felt, when he said: My soul thirsted for the living God. ... Of this thirst, since it is living, we may say that it kills. . . . But it must be noted that, as I began to say just now, this love is not as a rule felt at first, but only the dryness and emptiness are felt whereof we are speaking. Then in place of this love which afterwards becomes gradually enkindled, what the soul experiences in the midst of these aridities and emptinesses of the faculties is an habitual care and solicitude with respect to God, together with grief and fear that it is not serving Him. But it is a sacrifice which is not a little pleasing to God that the soul should go about afflicted and solicitous for His love. This solicitude and care lead the soul into that secret contemplation, until, the senses (that is, the sensual part) having in course of time been in some degree purged of the natural affections and powers by means of the aridities which it causes within them, this Divine love begins to be enkindled in the spirit."

The Living Flame, stanza 3: "In the first place, it must be noted that these caverns of the faculties, when they are not empty and purged and cleansed from all creature affection, are not conscious of their great emptiness, which is due to their profound capacity. . . . But, when they are empty and clean, the hunger and thirst and yearning of their spiritual sense become intolerable. . . . And this great feeling of pain commonly occurs towards the close of the illumination and purification of the soul, ere it attains to union, wherein it has final satisfaction. For, when the spiritual appetite is empty and purged, . . . then the suffering caused by this emptiness and thirst is worse than death, especially when the soul is vouchsafed some foresight or glimpse of the Divine ray and this is not communicated to it. It is souls in this condition that suffer with impatient love, so that they cannot remain long without either receiving or dying."

«See Ps. 83:6-8.

45 Ps. 45:9.

46 Ps. 33:9.

them with His virtues, living in solitude where they can always enjoy that most sweet Good alone and without witnesses.[47] When they feel His ineffable touches of love and His divine caresses, they are impatient to correspond with them and they begin before time to sing the loving canticle of the spouse who already possesses his soul in perfect calm and peace. God desires that these souls should then begin to taste the twelve fruits of His Spirit and to some extent enjoy the beatitudes.[48]

4. TRIALS OF THE FAITHFUL SOUL

These sensible fervors and premature rewards are not usually of long duration. The zealous Lover of souls desires them to be incomparably purer so that He can communicate Himself to them fully and without reserve. To achieve this purification, He submits them to hard tests of fidelity and He tries the rightness of intention by which they love Him. He makes them pass through fire and water and suffer other strenuous purgations in order to erase and destroy the impurities of self-love which prevent them from arriving at the desired refreshment (Ps. 65:12).

47 St. Augustine, *Meditations,* chaps. 32-34: "My God, true and most perfect life, from whom, through whom, and in whom live all things which truly live; . . . to separate ourselves from Thee is to fall, to turn to Thee is to be lifted up, and to remain in Thee is to be firm and secure; no one leaves Thee but he is deceived, no one seeks Thee but he is instructed, no one finds Thee but he is purified. To know Thee is to live, to serve Thee is to reign, to glorify Thee is joy and salvation to the soul. . . . I humbly beseech Thee that Thou root out of my soul all its vices and plant in it all the holy virtues. . . . Grant me . . . purity of heart and joy of soul so that loving Thee perfectly and praising Thee in a fitting manner, I may know, taste, and experience how sweet Thou art."

48 Cant. 1:3; 2:3. Grou, *Manuel,* pp. 46-47: "Souls that fully abandon themselves to God, offering Him their whole heart and in no way motivated by self-love or self-interest, begin, from the first moment of their conversion, to taste how good God is and how favorably He receives the sincerely repentant sinner. . . . But this peace which the soul experiences in the beginning is nothing in comparison with that which Jesus Christ promises it even in this life if it remains faithful and generous. The consummation of the spiritual life is immediate union with God; not only a union, but a transformation and unity—the expression of the adorable unity which reigns in the three divine persons. Jesus Christ said exactly that in His last prayer, for His chosen ones, which was addressed to His heavenly Father. . . . The Apocalypse expresses the intimate familiarity of this fellowship between God and the soul in the following words: 'I shall sup with him and he with Me.' . . . The food of the soul will be the very same as that by which God is nourished. God will pass into His creature, and the creature will pass into God, and they will have one and the same principle of life. Hence the soul already begins to enjoy here below and under the veil of faith what He promised to it. . . . This communication is such that even the soul which actually experiences it does not understand it nor can it ever understand it."

That soul which pants for God with so sweet a love and seeks Him with yearnings so ardent, which seems even now to practice the Christian virtues to a heroic degree and to progress along the path of perfection with gigantic strides, so rapidly, indeed, that it seems not to walk, hut to fly, does not truly fly because as yet wings have not been given it. Rather, it is carried in arms like a child which is fondled and led on by caresses. It must travel very far to be perfect, for it is still weak in virtue. As yet its delicate stomach cannot endure the solid food of the perfect man: great tribulations suffered alone and without any consolation except the pure and disinterested love of God.

The consolations and sensible fervors in which the soul abounds and by which all things are made easy for it are the milk of infancy with which God soothes and attracts it to Himself so that it may cultivate a love for the things of His divine service and a horror and nausea for the vile and deceptive delights of the world.[49] Therefore, if the soul has fled from earthly pleasures and has sought God with great ardor, this was owing in great measure, although the soul itself may not realize it, to the fact that in divine things it found more and more consolation.[50] It was with a subtle and disguised self-love drat it was seeking itself and its own tastes, for it loved God not purely for Himself, but because of His gifts.[51] The

49 St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 106: "I desire to see you become a manly man and not a child that still needs the milk of consolation, because a child is not capable of fighting for God. He who is still a victim of self-love finds no delight in anything other than the milk of his own spiritual and temporal consolations and he finds his pleasure with others like himself. But when he has become a man and has put away delicacy and self-love, he eats bread with the mouth of holy desire, chewing it with the teeth of hate and love, in such wise that the harder it is, the greater delight does he find in it. Being strong, he seeks the company of the strong . . , he runs with them to battle and he finds his delight in nothing other than fighting for truth, being glorified with St. Paul in suffering many tribulations because of it. . . . Men such as these shine forth with the wounds of Jesus Christ. Following His doctrine, they are on the tempestuous sea, but they always have courage and in bitterness they find great delights. The more they are despised by the world, the more perfectly are they recollected and united to God. The more persecuted by lies, the more they rejoice in the truth. Suffering hunger, nakedness, injuries and rebuffs, the more perfectly are they nourished by the heavenly food, clothed with the fire of charity, and liberated from the nakedness of self-love, which deprives them of all virtue. So they find their glory in ignominy and disdain."

80 Cant, i: 1-3.

51 Blosius, *Institutions,* chap. 12, sec. 3: "The ascetic must not seek his own consolation in the gifts of God, but only rhe divine glory. . . . He should be always prepared to be deprived of the counsels which God grants him. Yet, he must never reject or impede God's gifts, but receive them with humility and gratitude, ad

very facility which the soul found in the things of God and in the practice of virtue was at times an inducement to hidden presumption by which it considered itself something, if, indeed, it did not even strive to be preferred above others who are more perfect and who serve God with greater effort and more merit although perhaps they do not enjoy those fervors.

However, when souls are sufficiently detached from the world through such fervors and are drawn to the divine service and made to realize that it is good for them to adhere to God and put their hope in the Lord (Ps. 72:28), they usually lose all those fervors so that they can begin to love the Lord with a love that is more pure, firm, and sincere. God in His piety is hidden from them then and they must seek Him alone and without any sensible attraction. That they may seek Him more earnestly and serve Him through pure love and not through any self-interest, He lets them walk, as it were, on foot, alone, obscurely, and without any clearly-defined route.[52] Yet even in this state, God is attracting them in a hidden manner and He holds them by the hand so that they do not fall.[53]

In the face of this unexpected change, they are astonished and disconcerted and they know not what to do. They now find it difficult and troublesome to advance even a single step, where formerly they ran and almost flew, but they do not realize that even at that time they were carried in the arms of another. The beautiful and radiant light which shone in their souls is now succeeded by heavy darkness; ardent fervor gives place to glacial frigidity. Everything becomes difficult; even the most simple and pleasant things gradually become repugnant and loathsome. Now there is only coldness, reluctance, and aversion for what formerly was so delightful. They have a feeling for nothing, and everything seems insupportable to them and, if they withdraw into themselves, they find themselves even more insufferable than the many hardships and contradictions outside. In the midst of that darkness,

miring the divine goodness which gives such favors to one so unworthy. . . . He should also take care that by excessive austerities assumed at his own good pleasure, he does not place an obstacle to grace and the operation of God."

52 Cant. 3: i f.

53 St. Gertrude, *Rez'elationes,* III, 18: "I would that my chosen ones be convinced of the fact that they please me most when they serve Me at their own expense; that is, when, lacking the savor of devotion, they persevere faithfully in their prayers and good works, trusting in My piety to accept them. There are many who even with fervor and consolations, lose merit and do not advance."

which becomes more and more dense, and that increasing aridity and difficulty for good, the only things that stand out are the ugliness of their evil inclinations and the disorder of their passions, which seem so unruly that one would think they had never been controlled. They do not attempt to give a reason for what is taking place in themselves. It is highly disconcerting for them to see themselves fall so suddenly from the high state in which they had thought themselves to be, down to the patent misery and disgrace in which they now find themselves.

They fear that all their lofty perfection may have been an illusion or a deceit of the enemy; that they have aspired to a life to which they were not called; that God rejects them as unworthy; and that now no remedy can be found for their evils. They continually torment themselves with fears and gloomy thoughts. However much they reflect, they cannot understand the reason for this abandonment and the severity with which God is treating them. Just when they begin to serve and love Him earnestly, He buries them in oblivion and abandons them to their own weakness! They fear lest they may have offended Him without adverting to it and they repeatedly and scrupulously examine their consciences to see in what way they may have done so. Even when they cannot find anything definite, they find themselves in such confusion amid the disorder of their evil inclinations that they think they have consented to all of them, that they are living in sin, and that they are justly reprobated.

But the secret love of God upholds them so that they do not fall into despair. They desire to turn back to Him most earnestly, but they find themselves without strength or energy for anything and all ways seem closed to them. Prayer, even that which is most direct, and in which formerly they found great delight, now seems impossible to them. They go to it as to a martyrdom for they can no longer find therein any holy thought or feel any affection that will sustain them. Rather, they find themselves more tempted and confused than ever. Well might the soul then lament with the Prophet of sorrows:

How hath the Lord covered with obscurity the daughter of Sion . . . how hath He cast down from heaven to the earth the glorious one of Israel. . . . I am the man that sees my poverty by the rod of His indigna-

tion. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, and not into light. . . . He hath compassed me with gall and labor . . . He hath made my fetters heavy. Yea, and when I cry, and entreat, He hath shut out my prayer. He hath shut up my ways with square stones, He hath turned my paths upside down. . . . I am made a derision to all my people, their song all the day long. . . . My end and my hope is perished from the Lord. Remember my poverty, and transgression, the wormwood, and the gall. I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me. . . . The Lord is my portion, said my soul: therefore will I wait for Him. The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the Soul that seeketh Him. It is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God. . . . [I] shall sit solitary and hold [my] peace: because [I have] taken it up upon [myself]. . . . For the Lord will not cast off forever. . . . Thou hast set a cloud before Thee, that our prayer may not pass through.[54]

They must continue to exert themselves; to trust from day to day, with their mouth placed in the dust and their tongue stuck to their palate. They must resign themselves to the will of God and await His mercy. And he who perseveres to the end, crying out from his heart, since he cannot do so with his tongue, that one will be saved. In silence and hope is all his strength.

Terrible Crisis and Segregation

If there is no one to direct these afflicted souls with great prudence during these trials and to animate them with charity or if the souls themselves are not faithful and generous, there is danger that little by little and under specious pretexts they will abandon the only recourse which is open to them: prayer.[55] Because of the hardship which they experience, instead of believing prayer to be more meritorious as it is harder, and more necessary as temptation is stronger, they easily persuade themselves that this exercise is not for them and that it serves only to make them offend God more.[56] So it is that many miserable souls abandon prayer little

64 Lam. 2:1; 3:1-44; *passim.*

55 Palaphox, *Varôn de deseos,* Introd.: "If the soul is lacking in prayer, which is the fuel of divine love, it can readily pass from the interior life to an exterior one; from the exterior, to laxity; and from laxity, to death."

56 St. Catherine of Siena, *Life,* I, u: "Those who are not on their guard, abandon spiritual exercises when they find themselves deprived of the ordinary con-

by little in order to devote themselves to other exercises which arc less burdensome. Ultimately they become dissipated and they lose that secret affection which continually preoccupies them and attracts them to God.

'I hey well know or they should know now (although they may not fully understand this intimate divine operation) that the Lord is calling them to a more perfect life, to a life that is more interior and more mortified. They know, too, that they will be guilty before Him if they harden their hearts and are deaf to that sweet and insistent call.[57] Therefore, if they resist Him or if they do not heed the mysterious inner voice which calls them so insistently, they cannot be excused. Because they have tempted God, they will be excluded from that divine and delightful tranquillity wherewith He lives with them.[58]

This is the terrible crisis wherein is decided the fate of so many souls that have not only been called to serve God but that have had the good fortune to enjoy the sweetness of His fellowship and to sit at His table. Many there are who wish to accompany Jesus in His triumphs and His consolations, but not in His sufferings. Such souls quickly lose sight of Him. They join the crowd which follows Him out of sheer curiosity and are prone to acclaim Him or to jeer Him or to be ashamed of Him and abandon Him. However much they may bless and praise Him at certain times, He will not give Himself to such souls in an intimate manner because He knows the inconstancy and deceitfulness of their hearts.[59]

They must suffer with Him if they wish to be glorified with Him. They must accompany Him in all His ways if they wish to enjoy the intimacy of His company. They must take up His yoke if they wish to find rest and they must lovingly embrace their daily crosses, following Him with resolution and perseverance so that[67]

solations. . . . In this way, many falter and cause Satan to rejoice. For Satan desires nothing other than to deprive them of the weapons of Jesus Christ which make souls invincible. When the Christian feels himself weakening, he must continue his exercises and even prolong them instead of abandoning them."

67 The soul of a certain lady once appeared to the Ven. Francesca of the Blessed Sacrament, begging prayers, and amidst great lamentation she told the mystic that she was now in a great purgatory because she had not responded to the sincere desire which she had had to become a religious."

58 See Ps. 94:11; Hcb. 3:12-19; 4:1-11; Matt. 11:29.

89 John 2:24.

they may walk not now in darkness but may always have the light of life. They must tread the narrow path of mortification and abnegation and enter through the narrow gate of total self-renunciation in order to live fully in Jesus Christ.

Those who wish to walk "not by the wild, difficult, and dangerous paths, but on the highway, the level and beaten track," thinking that very certainly they are "avoiding singularity[60] and are following the ordinary path which is followed by the majority," walk blindly to their own perdition, for the wide and well-traveled path leads to ruin. Therefore does the Lord command us to enter by the narrow gate.[61] He who does not resolve to enter by that gate, cannot complain at not finding mystical rest.[62]

I. THE SMALL NUMBER OF SOULS THAT SURVIVE THIS CRISIS

"How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!"[63] Jesus Himself is that gate and that way. Those who enter by Him are saved; they find the abundance, the amplitude, and the liberty of the sons of God and they shall know the secrets of the Father.[64] But he who is resolved to follow Him, must deny himself and must take up his cross and die to all things for Him and His gospel. He who dies will find true life; but he who does not, will perish.[65] "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it

80 This "singularity," which consists in being faithful in all things, although other souls are not so, is indispensable for pleasing God, however much it may displease the dissolute who brand it as an oddity. Therefore, St. Bernard says that no one but the "singular" can be a saint, for there is nothing more rare than true sanctity. The singularity that is to be censored is that which is a departure from the law to follow one's own caprice.

81 Matt. 7:13.

82 Huby, *Maximes,* no. 15: "The road is wide which leads to sin, for one travels by that road by giving full license to the senses and to nature. But the road which leads to perfection is narrow because one cannot walk by it save through mortification of the senses and violence done to the natural inclinations. . . . But the wide road of sensual license leads to slavery, obscurity, and misery. . . . On the contrary, by the narrow path of mortification one arrives at a vast, bright, and delightful region. This is the state of perfection where the soul, freed from the bonds of the senses and strong and invincible against all its enemies, lives with God in a holy liberty and in the abundance of true and lasting goods."

83 Matt. 7:14.

84 See John 10:9; 14:6.

85 See Mark 8:34-35.

unto life eternal." 60 Therefore he who does not accept his cross and follow the Savior valiantly, is not worthy of Him.67 He who does not renounce all his attachments cannot be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.68

So it is that many devout souls gladly hear the word of God but lack the generosity required to practice it as He demands. As a result they are cast out or at least excluded from the intimacy of the divine fellowship. They lead a life that is always lukewarm and listless, serving God as slaves out of pure fear or as mercenaries, motivated by self-interest rather than by love as His own sons.69 I hese weak souls, possessing but little faith and less generosity, interested in self and filled with self-love, who serve God for human ends and seek themselves in all that they do; those who lack the magnanimity and stability proper to sincere love and fervor, when they see that from all appearances the ways to God are closed to them, do not weary themselves by calling to Elim or by suffering repulses. They amuse themselves with trifles in the attempt to do His will if, indeed, they do not go off like the prodigal son, into a far region and completely forget the paternal home.70

"Hohn 12:25.

67 See Matt. 10:38.

68 See Luke 14:33.

es St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 38: "The soul which walks in servile fear is perfect in none of its works. In whatever state such a soul may be, it begins to fall away in little things as well as in great things and it never reaches perfection in anything that it begins to do. O how dangerous is this fear! It cuts off the arms of holy desire, it blinds a man so that he can neither know nor see the truth because his love proceeds from the blindness of self-love."

St. Bernard, explaining the canticle of Ezechiel *(Serm.* 3, de div., no. 9), distinguishes three classes of the faithful or three states in the soul's progress: that of *servants,* who are motivated principally by fear; that of the *mercenaries,* who seek their own interests; and that of *sons,* who are motivated by the love of God and desire only His glory and praise. "The servant says: 'I shall go to the gates of hell'; the mercenary, 'I shall not see the Lord God'; the son, 'We shall sing our psalms.' " To the sons, the Father will reveal His truth which is hidden from the servants and the mercenaries. "The father shall make thy truth known to the children" (Isa. 38:19). "It is not made known to the servant because the servant does not know what his master does. The mercenary cannot contemplate this truth because he seeks only his own interests. It is revealed only to the sons because they have no other wish than that of the Father. ... To the servant is revealed the power; to the mercenary, the happiness; and to the son, the truth."

70 St. Augustine, *Confessions,* V, 2: "Where did they go when they fled from Thy presence? Where can they go that Thou canst not find them? But they fled that they might not see Thee and yet all the time they were seen by Thee and being blinded, they stumbled upon Thee, for Thou forsakest none of the things which

They do not realize that love is unconquerable and never faint-hearted; it is inflamed by its very difficulties. They forget also that humble and persevering prayer which pierces the clouds obtains all things.[71] They are easily persuaded that God no longer wishes to hear their prayers, when actually He desires that they persist in their loving call so that He can open the gate to them and that they should continue their pleas so that He can enrich them with His gifts.[72] They say that this way of prayer is not for them—as if, indeed, it were not for all the faithful!—and thinking that it has no merit when performed amid such dryness, they gradually abandon it until, lacking the power which sustains them and the secret attraction which draws them to divine things, they recall the flesh-pots of Egypt and, embroiled as they are in their own weakness, they are once more assailed by passions and torn by their personal attachments and the pleasures of the world. They quickly pass from what is lawful to what is unlawful until they become worse than they were before and they manifest to all that, looking back over their shoulders, they are not worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

How many souls are lost in this crisis or, at least, are incapacitated for making any further progress and arriving at the grade of perfection to which the Lord has called them! How many religious, who passed a good part of their novitiate with great fervor, become unsuited for the spiritual life as soon as they begin to experience dryness! Instead of making progress by drawing from that aridity the profit which God desires, they fall into a lamentable state of lukewarmness and dissipation. Such souls are completely governed by the standards of human prudence and they pay no heed to the prudence of the Spirit whose voice they continually throttle with serious danger of falling into grave faults.

Living in such a state of carelessness, if they are slow to turn to God with their whole heart, resolved to follow His holy inspirations and to provide themselves with the oil of charity, they are likely to discover, as did the foolish virgins, that the doors are

Thou hast made. . . . Let them turn back and seek Thee, for Thou art there within their hearts. They lament their wanderings which have been so painful to them. Tenderly wilt Thou dry their tears, that they may weep even more and rejoice in their weeping."

71 Ecclus. 35:21.

72 Matt. 7:7.

closed, and they will hear the words: "I know you not." If at last they are admitted to the nuptials of the Lamb, it will be only by dint of much entreaty and of suffering other trials painful beyond compare; much more difficult than they would have suffered had they persevered.[73]

Other souls, more sagacious, seeing the danger to which they expose themselves when they imprudently begin to seek consolation from creatures, take themselves in hand and, truly repentant, strengthen their weakness, humble themselves, confound self, enliven their faith and confidence and say to the Lord with St. Peter: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Being utterly void of confidence in themselves, they become encouraged to seek divine aid, watching and praying lest they again enter into temptation. As long as they persevere in this, they are well secured. But if they falter the slightest bit, then immediately the enemy suggests to them that they should seek some solace when they weaken and, abandoning those pious exercises which now appear so repugnant to them, they begin again to fall away until once more they realize their danger and recognize his snares.[74]

2. NECESSITY OF A GOOD DIRECTOR

Thus many souls pass their lives alternately between firmness and slackness, between fervor and lukewarmness. At one moment they resolve to follow the Savior on the road to Calvary; at the next, they turn their back on Him completely and deliver themselves over to the world.

Those who are fortunate enough to have a good director who is zealous and intelligent and who will teach them how to remain in silence before our Lord with only a loving glance and an earnest desire of pleasing Him (for they are unable to meditate or ask for anything or give expression to their affections), will, if they are docile, gradually overcome the obstacles by means of his coun-

73Cf. Luke 13:24-27; 14:24.

74 St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 60: "The demon wants nothing more than to separate us from holy prayer, either through self-compassion and regard for our body or through sloth or fatigue of spirit. For none of these reasons must we cease this holy exercise, but we must conquer our weakness by reflecting on the goodness of God. . . . Hide yourselves, my sons, in the wounds of Christ crucified; love one another for Christ crucified and do not fear that anything will conquer you. For you do all things in Him who lives in you and strengthens you."

seis anil encouragements and will happily pass through this terrible period of trials. Without such a director they are exposed to great danger.[75]

But if the spiritual director is a blind man seeking to lead the blind, as unfortunately happens often, then he will do nothing but lead them to the abyss, talking to them of "scruples" and advising them to leave off prayer when actually that is their only refuge. At other times he will oblige them to meditate when it is altogether impossible for them to do so because God has placed them in another state of prayer which is so much the more elevated as it is more subtle and hidden from the senses. The only thing that would result from such souls being forced to meditate would be to dissipate them more, to increase their aridity and distaste, and to smother the voice of the Holy Ghost. Yet, if such souls are faithful to God and persevere as they ought, serving Him with love and ever taking care to walk in His sweet presence and to be docile to His inspirations, He will then take them by the hand lest they fall and He will supply exceedingly for the defects of the director so that in spite of the director and the many dangers, the soul will soon emerge victorious. Souls must flee from a bad director and discreetly ignore him. If they cannot find another director, it is better for them, as St. Teresa says, to remain without one, to trust in God who has permitted such a thing, rather than to be guided by a blind man.[70]

Many poor directors neither feel nor know nor wish to know the things of the spirit. They have a crass ignorance of the ways of God, a habitual imprudence and rashness, a lack of zeal,—or sometimes, an excess of zeal—and base and earthly viewpoints. According to Father Godinez,[77] these shortcomings in directors

[76] *Dark Night of the Soul,* I, io: "These souls turn back at such a time if there is none who understands them; they abandon the road or lose courage; or, at the least, they arc hindered from going farther by the great trouble which they take in advancing along the road of meditation and reasoning. . . . But this trouble that they are taking is quite useless, for God is now leading them by another road, which is that of contemplation, and is very different from the first; for the one is of meditation and reasoning, and the other belongs neither to imagination nor yet to reasoning."

[76] Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* IV, 4, 3: "It is a great misfortune for a soul towards which God has great designs, to fall into the hands of a director who is guided only by human prudence, and has more policy than unction."

[77] *Teologia Mistica,* VII, 1.

are responsible for the failure of the great majority, the ninety-nine percent, of the souls that, when they find themselves in this state of dryness, instead of passing completely to the state of contemplation to which God insistently calls them, sadly fall from their first fervor into a habitual lukewarmness or even return to a worldly life. Other souls remain for a long time in these trials, with a great deal of labor but scarcely any fruit, because in good faith they follow rash advice and try to meditate as they did in the beginning. As a result, they consistently resist the Holy Ghost who wishes to place them in that secret contemplation.

3. THE VALIANT AND THE COWARDLY

There are other souls who, without abandoning the good way or ceasing to have recourse to prayer whenever they are able, remain in it in silence when they see that the Spirit asks that of them. They seek to supply for that which excessive aridity prevents them from doing, making use of pious readings and other holy occupations and following prudent counsel until they recover the light and can turn again with great animation to their prayer?[8] But the more valiant souls, far from weakening in times of their aridity or temptations, try to prolong their prayers as far as health permits, as did Jesus in the Garden. Confused at seeing clearly their own nothingness and weakness, they realize that then more than ever they must watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. In their own mortal agony they remember that of the Lord and they strive to follow faithfully in His footsteps and to serve Him in all that pleases Him, "with help and without help." They protest truly that they seek Him alone and not His gifts, much less themselves, and in exchange for pleasing Him and not offending Him, they would happily spencT their whole life in this martyrdom or in any other that He may send to them. Once their intention is rectified and they are firmly established in faith and humility and totally distrustful of self, they place all their confidence in God. The more He seems to close the gate to them, the greater the insistence with which they seek Him, trusting in I lis[78]

[78] See St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 37; *Interior Castle,* VI, chap, i; Bartholomew of th« Martyrs, *Comp, myst. doctr.,* chap. 18.

infinite mercy and crying out unceasingly: "Lord, save us; we perish!"

Thus they always wait for the only one who can save them from pusillanimity of spirit and a storm.[79] They arouse themselves to wait for Him, knowing that He will not keep them waiting very long: "If it make any delay, wait for it: for it shall surely come, and it shall not be slack."[80] As they live by faith, their interior aspirations and holy desires are a continuous and efficacious prayer which conquers all.[81] Souls that are so resolute and generous, that serve God so earnestly and with such a sincere and pure love, are not long in finding Him, for already they possess Him within themselves. In a short time they arrive at a lofty sanctity.

Here, then, is where the segregation of souls takes place and where their faith, love, fidelity, and stability are tested. It is at this period that some souls are rejected as unprofitable because they have turned their eyes back to the world. Other souls continue to serve God but with much lukewarmness and listlessness and, if they do not increase their fervor, they will be vomited out.[82] Still others serve Him with a certain fervor but without completely renouncing themselves for they still harbor earthly affections and an excessive love for pastimes which dissipate them and even put them in serious danger. The generality of those who at one time were devout enough and even passed for good Christians or very observant religious now live carelessly and indifferently. To flee from dryness and the difficulties which they experience in prayer, they are content with the very least, with what obedience imposes on them. Even the little time which they actually devote

79 Ps. 54:9.

80 Hab. 2:3; Heb. 10:37.

81 St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue,* II, *66:* "The holy desire of the soul is a constant prayer and all the more so when it is animated by charity for God and one's neighbor. . . . But at certain times those affections must be raised to Me by an actual devotion. And know, daughter, that the soul which perseveres in humble and faithful prayer attains all virtues. . . . Under no circumstances must the exercise of prayer be discarded or discontinued because of contradictions, distractions, and temptations which may be found therein. The enemy provokes such things in an effort to impede the soul, astutely suggesting that such prayer is useless and urging the soul to abandon it as something troublesome, thus to be deprived of that weapon which is so powerful against all stratagems. O how beneficial to the soul and how pleasing to Me is that prayer which the soul lovingly makes by considering My goodness and its own baseness!"

82 Apoc. 3:16.

to prayer is spent mostly in reading. According to their liking, they would dedicate themselves almost entirely to an active life. They abandon themselves to exterior works; they do not observe silence or control their senses or maintain the recollection which is necessary to walk in the presence of God and to heed the motions, inspirations, and operations of the divine Spirit. In a word, they live a life that is more and more dissipated.[83] Not to pray well is to be unable to live well.[84] Such souls seldom try to enter into themselves for fear of their own misery and, not wishing to know themselves, they are unable to remedy their miseries. Since they stifle the impulses of the renewing Spirit, their piety is ultimately reduced to a monotonous routine of set formulas and, since they do not struggle ceaselessly to acquire perfect purity of heart, their eyes are never sufficiently cleansed so that they can see the splendor of the Sun of justice.[85] Since they do not persevere in seeking God in solitude, they cannot hear the voice of His eternal Word or discover the mysteries of His kingdom which are within us.[80] There-

83 Jas. i: 26: "And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, that man's religion is vain."

84 St. Augustine, *Senno 90:* "He knows how to live rightly, who knows how to pray rightly."

85 Lallcmant, *Spiritttal Doctrine,* V, 2, art. t: "The exterior life of religious employed in the service of their neighbour is most imperfect, and even perilous, unless it be accompanied with the interior life; and they who are engaged in these kinds of offices *of* charity and zeal, unless they join thereto exercises of interior recollection, will never make any notable progress in perfection. . . . They will do things that appear great in the eyes of the world. They will preach; they will labour in missions; they will traverse seas, and expose themselves to danger of death, and to the fatigues attendant on the longest journeys, for the salvation of their neighbour. But with all this they will never make much progress in the purgative life. The acts of virtue they perform will proceed partly from grace and partly from nature. They will never do such as are purely supernatural, and under specious pretexts self-love will always make them follow their own inclinations and do their own will. They will fall continually into their Ordinary faults and imperfections, and will be in great danger of being lost; for as they are occupied in anything but discovering the irregularities of their heart, they never think of purging it; so that it is continually filling with sins and miseries, which gradually enfeeble the strength of the soul, and end at last in entirely stifling devotion and the Spirit of God.

"Secondly, they will never attain to the perfection of the illuminative life, which consists in discovering in all things the will of God; for it is only interior men who can discern it in everything. My superiors, my rules, the duties of my state, may indeed direct me in regard to the exterior, and indicate to me what God desires me to do at such a time and in such a place; but they cannot teach me the way in which God wills that I should do it."

88 St. Augustine, *Confessions,* IV, 11: "Do not become foolish, my soul, in seek ing after vanity, the tumultuous noise of which deafens the ears of thy heart. I Iced

fore, however much they think that they work for the glory of God, and whatever great exterior services they perform for His Church, they cannot enter into the intimate communications which He reserves for His faithful sons who, to please Him in all things, remain at His side and heed His every inspiration. Here is the reason why so many Christians of exemplary life and so many religious who seem to be exemplary never enter into true contemplation: they are not truly interior souls and they do not abandon themselves to God entirely.[87] Although the Lord gently says to all: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate that leadeth to life," [88] few succeed in finding it, for the simple reason that they are few who persevere in doing violence to self. Yet this violence is necessary if they are to follow Him faithfully along the narrow path of the Cross and to be illumined by Him so as to see Him who is full of grace and truth.

According to the degree of fidelity and constancy with which

the eternal Word who calls for you to return to Him, for in Him is your rest, where love is never forsaken unless you first forsake His love."

87 *Way of Perfection,* chap. XVI: "If wc do not give ourselves to His Majesty as resolutely as He gives Himself to us. He will be doing more than enough for us if He leaves us in mental prayer and from time to time visits us as He would visit servants in His vineyard. But these others are His beloved children, whom He would never want to banish from His side; and, as they have no desire to leave Him, He never does so. He seats them at His table, and feeds them with His own food. . . ." Chap. 32: "Unless we make a total surrender of our will to the Lord, and put ourselves in His hands so that He may do in all things what is best for us; in accordance with His will, He will never allow us to drjnk of [this water]. This is the perfect contemplation of which you asked me to write to you."

Life, chap. XI: "But so niggardly and so slow are we in giving ourselves wholly to God that we do not prepare ourselves as we should to receive that precious thing which it is His Majesty's will that we should enjoy only at a great price. I am quite clear that there is nothing on earth with which so great a blessing can be purchased; but if we did what we could to obtain it, if we cherished no attachment to earthly things, and if all our cares and all our intercourse were centered in heaven, I believe there is no doubt that this blessing would be given us very speedily."

Those who follow their own inclinations and use the excuse that they must work in the fields or some other pretext for not accepting the divine invitation, will be excluded from the mystical supper and in their place will be admitted the blind and the crippled.

Imitation of Christ, II, 1: "Learn to contemn exterior things and to give thyself to interior things, and you will see the kingdom of God come to you." Book HI, chap. 31: "This is the reason why there are found so few contemplatives, because few there are who know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures. . . . Many are found who desire contemplation, but they do not practise those things which are required for its attainment."

88See Matt. 7:13 f. Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able."

they deny themselves in order to follow Jesus Christ, abandoning themselves without reserve to the will of the Father and walking always in His presence with a pure heart which ever seeks to please Him more, the few souls that persevere in this narrow way are tempted and fortified, rectified and made secure, illumined and inspired, and their hearts are expanded to do and to suffer for the glory of God. Following His inspirations with fidelity, they come to enjoy His familiarity and His favors and they can then run and even fly along His mysterious paths to the very summit of the holy mountain.89

4- GRATUITOUS SELECTION OF ASCETICS AND CONTEMPLATIVES

At the very beginning, God himself usually makes a gratuitous selection from among the valiant souls that cooperate with His graces. Some of them He selects to reach almost to the conforming union by walking or running along the ordinary paths of the ascetical way which are trod by all his servants. They strive to be faithful in the practice of virtue and are strengthened in discursive prayer or meditation with which is mingled something of affective prayer and that of loving vision. For this reason, this phase manifests itself as a transition or an ascetico-mystical state.

89 Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* VII, 4, art. 8: "When God places a soul in this state of mystical darkness, and strips it thus of its first lights, He enlarges its understanding and its will, rendering them capable of performing acts of eminent perfection.

"To arrive at this degree, there is need of a generous virtue, a faithful correspondence with grace, a complete detachment from self, and an unreserved surrender of ourselves to God: and as we are exceedingly pusillanimous, there are but very few who have courage enough to reach this point, and fewer still who advance further, because men cannot make up their mind to strip themselves perfectly of creatures."

Grou, *Manuel,* pp. 168 f.: "When God wishes ro exact great sacrifices from a soul, He gives it a great generosity and He enlarges the heart so that it sees and feels how much He deserves. ... It then clearly realizes that as vet it has done nothing for God and it conceives an immense desire to sacrifice everything for Him. Since whatever it docs or suffers is not worthy of so exalted a Majesty, the soul pleads that He be glorified in it in any way that it pleases Him, and to this end the soul abandons itself to Him without reserve. Then its heart is enlarged and, as much as is possible to any creature, it is made apt for the great designs of God. The yoke of the precepts and even of the counsels, which seem so heavy and burdensome to the ordinary Christian, seem to this soul sweet and light. Surprised that God should require so small a thing of it, the soul would wish to do a thousand times more for love of Him."

David experienced this when he said: "I ran along the path of Thy commandments when Thou enlarged my heart."

Other souls I le desires to carry in His arms or under the breathing of the Spirit so that they arrive more quickly at a higher place and they soon fly with the wings of contemplation through the lofty regions of the mystical life. Yet He quickly withdraws this favor if they do not make good use of it.

Basically, sanctification will be identical in both, for it consists in the interior renewal;[80] in stripping off the old man with his deeds and putting on the new;[81] being filled with knowledge of His will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.[82] But this knowledge of God becomes much clearer and more perfect in the mystics who in one way or another feel and experience at times the admirable mysteries of their purification, renewal, and illumination, and the progress of their union with God.

In true ascetics, or those esteemed as such, who dedicate themselves by preference and even sometimes excessively to the active life without discarding prayer and recollection, these interior trials which cleanse and test them are not usually so painful and arduous. The darkness is not very obscure and, if they persevere in it, there usually appears some ray of light which encourages them to continue their meditations, to find new vigor, and to withdraw themselves from sensible consolations in order to seek God for Himself alone and not for His gifts. They are gradually purified by this alternating light and darkness. They are strengthened in virtue and they grow in the knowledge and charity of God which translates itself to the exterior in every sort of good works. By these works such souls exert a salutary influence on the society in which they live.

They do not feel or know directly the presence of the consoling Spirit who animates them, but they know Him only through His fruits: the effects and changes which they evidence in themselves. They see that they have been made into something else, but they do not know how. Ultimately and with great difficulty they arrive at a certain type of union. They are possessed by Him and enlightened by His precious gifts of understanding and wis-

80 Eph. 4:24.
81 Col. 3:9 f.
82 *Ibid., 19 f.*

dom and they begin to discover the hidden glory of the sons of God. Now they enter fully into the mystical life which is proper to perfect Christians.

If it happens that such souls do not enter the mystical state, this is certainly their own fault. They did not proceed with the necessary fervor or with the fidelity which is required. They were more mindful of their own prudence than of the divine lights, without which it is impossible to arrive at the true illumination proper to more advanced souls, and it is even more impossible to reach the unitive state.

APPENDIX

1. Poor Spiritual Directors

The following words of St. John of the Cross *(Living Flame of Love,* stanza 3, pp. 189-91) are well worthy of much consideration:

These spiritual directors such as we have been describing fail to understand souls that have attained to this solitary and quiet contemplation, because they themselves have not arrived so far, nor learned what it means to leave behind the discursive reasoning of meditations, as I have said, and they think that these souls are idle. And therefore they disturb and impede the peace of this quiet and hushed contemplation which God has been giving their penitents by His own power, and they cause them to follow the road of meditation and imaginative reasoning and make them perform interior acts, wherein the aforementioned souls find great repugnance, aridity and distraction, since they would fain remain in their holy rest and their quiet and peaceful state of recollection. . . . The penitents, however, are unable to do as they did previously, and can enter into none of these things, for the time for them has now passed and they belong no more to their proper path; but the penitents are doubly disturbed and believe that they are going to perdition. . . .

Such persons have no knowledge of what is meant by spirituality. They offer a great insult and great irreverence to God, by laying their coarse hands where God is working. For it has cost Him dearly to bring these souls to this place and He greatly esteems having brought them to this solitude and emptiness of their faculties and operations, that He may speak to their hearts, which is what He ever desires. He has Himself taken them by the hand, and He Himself reigns in their souls in abun-

dant peace and quietness, causing the natural acts of their faculties to fail wherewith they toiled all night and wrought nothing. And He has brought peace to their spirits without the work and operation of sense, for neither sense nor any act thereof is capable of receiving spirit.

I low precious in His sight is this tranquillity or slumbering or withdrawal of sense can be clearly seen in that adjuration, so notable and effective, that He utters in the Songs, where He says: I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the goats and harts of the fields, that ye awaken not my beloved nor cause her to wake until she please (Cant. 3:5). . . . But these spiritual directors will not let the soul have repose or quiet, but demand that it shall continually labour and work, that it may leave no room for God to work, and that that which He is working may be undone and wiped out through the operation of the soul. They have become as the little foxes which tear down the flowering vine of the soul (Cant. 2:15); for which reason the Lord complains through Isaias, saying: Ye have eaten up My vineyard (Isa. 3:14).

But, it may possibly be said, these directors err with good intent, through insufficiency of knowledge. This, however, does not excuse them for the advice which they are rash enough to give without first learning to understand either the way that the soul is taking or its spirit. Not understanding this, they are laying their coarse hands upon things that they understand not, instead of leaving them for those who are able to understand them; for it is a thing of no small weight, and no slight crime, to cause the soul to lose inestimable blessings and sometimes to leave it completely confused by rash counsel. And thus one who rashly errs, being under an obligation to give reliable advice—as is every man, whatever his office—shall not go unpunished, by reason of the harm that he has done. For the business of God has to be undertaken with great circumspection, and with eyes wide open, most of all in a case of such great importance and a business so sublime as is the business of these souls, where a man may bring them almost infinite gain if the advice he gives be good and almost infinite loss if it be mistaken.

The saint is even more severe in his censuring of those "zealous" directors who will not permit souls to seek from others the lights which these directors themselves lack. He continues *(ibid.,* pp. 191-94):

But if you will still maintain that you have some excuse, though for myself I can see none, you will at least be unable to say that there is any excuse for one who, in his treatment of a soul, never allows it to go out of his jurisdiction, for certain vain reasons and intentions which he best

knows. Such a person will not go unpunished, for it is certain that, if that soul is to make progress by going forward on the spiritual road, . . . it will of necessity require instruction of a higher kind and a deeper spirituality than that of such a director. . . . Is it possible that you yourself can perform all these offices, and consider yourself so consummate a master that this soul shall never need any other? And supposing that you have sufficient experience to direct some one soul, . . . it is surely impossible for you to have sufficient experience for the direction of all those whom you refuse to allow to go out of your hands; for . . . there shall hardly be found a single spirit who can walk even half the way which is suitable for another. . . . You yourself tyrannize over souls, . . . so that you not only strive that they may not leave you, but, what is worse, if any one of them should at some time have gone to talk with another director, . . . or if God should lead him in order to teach him something which you have not taught him, you behave to him (I say it not without shame) like a husband who is jealous of his wife; nor is your jealousy even due to desire for the honour of God, . . . : it is due only to your own pride and presumption. . . . Spiritual directors, then, ought to give these souls freedom, . . . since they know not by what means God desires such a soul to make progress, especially when the penitent dislikes the instruction that he is receiving, which is a sign that it is of no profit to him, either because God is leading him on farther, or by another way than that by which his director has been leading him, or because the director himself has changed his way of dealing with his penitents. The director, in such a case, should himself advise a change.

St. Peter of Alcantara said to St. Teresa: "One should speak of the perfection of life only with those who live it, because ordinarily one has knowledge and experience only of those things which he actually does." St. Teresa herself observes in her *Life* (chap. 30): "For if the Lord brings anyone to this state He will find no pleasure or comfort equal to that of meeting with another whom he believes He has brought along the first part of the same road."

2. Human Prudence and the Ways of the Spirit

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* IV, 2, art. 2:

There are but few perfect souls, because there are but few who follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The reason why we are so slow in arriving at perfection, or never arrive at it at all, is, that in almost everything we are led by nature and human views. We follow but little, if at all, the

guidance of the Holy Spirit, to whom it belongs to enlighten, direct, and animate.

The generality of religious, even of the good and virtuous, follow in the guidance of their own conduct, and in the direction of others, only reason and common sense; and in this many of them excel. The rule is a good one, but it is not sufficient in order to arrive at Christian perfection.

Such persons are guided ordinarily by the general opinion of those amongst whom they live; and as the latter are imperfect, although their life is not irregular, seeing that the number of the perfect is very small, they never attain to the sublime wavs of the Spirit; they live like the generality, and their method of directing others is imperfect.

The Holy Spirit waits some time for them to enter into their own interior, and observing therein the operations of grace and those of nature, to dispose themselves to follow his guidance. But if they abuse the time and the favour he vouchsafes them, he abandons them at last to themselves, and leaves them in that darkness and that ignorance of their own interior which they have loved, and in which they henceforth live, amidst great perils to their salvation.

We may say with truth that there are but very few who persevere constantly in the ways of God. Many wander from them perpetually; the Holy Spirit calls them back by his inspirations; but as they are intractable, full of themselves, attached to their own opinions, puffed up with their own wisdom, they do not readily let themselves be guided. They enter but seldom in the ways of God's designs, and make no stay therein. . . . Thus they make but little progress, and are surprised by death, having taken but twenty steps where they might have taken ten thousand, had they abandoned themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, truly interior persons who are guided by the light of the Spirit of God, . . . proceed at a giant's pace, and fly, so to say, in the ways of grace.

Fénelon, *Sent, de piété:*

When a Christian is not as yet fully converted, he must be urged always to be circumspect; but after his conversion, the fear is that he may be too circumspect and then he must be urged to have that practical wisdom of which the Apostle speaks. If then he wishes to advance on the path to God, he must lose himself in order to find himself, gaining control over that prudence which serves as an aid to distrustful nature. He must drain the bitter chalice of the folly of the Cross, which is at times a martyrdom for those generous souls that are not destined to shed their blood. The suppression of those distracting and selfish returns to self

gives the soul inexplicable peace and liberty which are proper to true simplicity. . . . Such a soul condescends in everything and is unmindful of what others may think of it, although in charity it is always careful to avoid scandal. It does everything as best it can and with a calm attention, with no preoccupation as to the outcome. It neither judges itself nor fears to be judged. Let us aspire to such simplicity. . . . And the farther we are from it, the more we need to seek it. The majority of Christians are not even sincere, much less, simple. . . . They dissimulate to their neighbors and even deceive themselves. See also St. Francis de Sales, *Directorio,* chaps. 26 f.

3. How We Ought to Seek God

Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 34:

We must seek God in our heart, feel His presence, and confide in Him. Whenever a soul finds itself to be so destitute of the divine presence that it can in no way feel it, it does not rest until it has merited the experience of it. It detracts not a little from a virtuous man if for even one short hour he does not experience within himself the presence of God. . . . But as long as he keeps it fixed in his mind, he travels with absolute confidence and he does all things well. Without God, a man will never have security in anything or at any time. Many times the Lord is wont to hide Himself and if at such times we seek consolation in some other quarter and are not mindful of His Majesty, He withdraws still farther and takes away for a longer time the sweetness of His presence and gives us but very little consolation. He alone, then, must be sought and solicited, and he who looks at other things does not seek God. Further, one must not seek principally His gifts, or graces, or any other pleasant thing . . . ; but Himself, being totally submerged in His good will. In this way we shall succeed in having Him ever present to us and we shall constantly feel His presence. The interior life does not permit repose and slothfulness. All other arts at some time or other seek rest and cessation, but this art or heavenly knowledge demands all of a man's time. . . . It does not allow man to seek self but it requires that he should seek God alone who is present in every thing and time and place, in the least as well as in the greatest.

4. Why There Are So Few Chosen Ones

Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom,* chaps. 8-13:

Many are called to contemplation but how few there are who arc chosen! . . . You must realize that many times when I visit souls, I mil

rejected l>v them and treated as a stranger. But to those who love Me, I not only' come with effusive tenderness, but also remain with them and dwell in them, making them My secret abode. But none note this, save the few who live in solitude, withdrawn from the things of the world, and with their hearts placed on Me in order to know My desires and to follow' them out.

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* IV, 2, art. 1:

Feu' persons attain the graces which God has destined for them, or, when they have lost them, succeed afterwards in repairing the loss. The majority lack the necessary courage to conquer themselves, and the fidelity to trade with advantage in the gifts of God.

When we enter on the path of virtue, we w'alk at first in darkness; but if we follow the leading of grace faithfully and perseveringly, we shall infallibly attain a great light both for our own guidance and for that of others.

We wish to become saints in a day; we have not patience to await the ordinary course of grace. This proceeds from our pride and cowardice. Let us only be faithful in cooperating with the graces which God offers us, and he will not fail to lead us to the fulfilment of his designs.

St. John of the Cross, in the Prologue of his *Dark Night of the Soul,* states that there are very few who suffer and persevere in entering by the narrow gate and along the narrow path which leads to the life of which our Savior speaks in the Gospel. The narrow gate is the night of the senses in which the soul is despoiled and denuded in order to enter by that gate and later to travel along the narrow path which is the night of the spirit. This latter path, since it is so narrow, obscure, and terrifying, is traveled by very few, but its blessings are also greater.

CHAPTER III

The Dawn of Contemplation

WHEN God wills to introduce souls into the secret way of contemplation, first of all He usually increases the trials whereby those souls are purified and prepared for it. The passive purgations of mystics in the first hour are usually more terrible and more prolonged than in other servants of God who remain for a long time in the status of ascetics. Consequently mystics will at times find themselves more prone to refuse these purgations. They become discouraged and think themselves unworthy of the blessings which they could thereby obtain or, because of a lack of faith, resignation, and valor, they will not obtain from them all the fruit they could. Hence Ecclesiasticus admonishes us (6:18-29): "My son, from thy youth receive instruction, and even to thy gray hairs thou shalt find wisdom. . . . How very unpleasant is wisdom to the unlearned, and the unwise will not continue with her. . . . Search for her, and she shall be made known to thee, and w'hen thou hast gotten her, let her not go: for in the latter end thou shalt find rest in her, and she shall be turned to thy joy."

The Night of the Senses

Since God intends to carry those souls in His arms so that they may be completely moved and guided by His divine Spirit, He seeks first of all to beautify them, caress them, and make them docile so that they will offer not the slightest resistance. As He elevates them still higher, He makes them fully realize their own nothingness and weakness so that, when they see themselves flying,

they will not falter and will never dare to presume anything of themselves. Finally, since He intends to inundate them completely in the divine lights by which they begin even in this world to see and experience to some degree the mysteries of the kingdom, He must first purify their eyes from all earthly dross and the illusions of weak human light which would prevent their perceiving the most pure brilliancy of the divine light. Therefore He first blinds them so that afterward they may see better. Inferior lights must disappear or be covered over if souls are to see the shimmering lights of heaven.

God subjects these souls to an obscurity or darkness which is dreadful and prolonged, thus disposing them to be able later to perceive the delicate irradiations with which He will gradually enlighten them. In this darkness they learn by experience that they can see nothing aright with their own reason. As a result, they will follow in blind and perfect obedience the one who authoritatively directs and governs them and they will be more prompt in following the direction and rules of the Holy Ghost. From this follows the great need they have of a zealous director who is well versed in things mystical. By following his prudent counsel, they are able to advance profitably. But if they attempt to guide themselves in anything, they immediately stumble and make mistakes.

I. THE SURE GUIDANCE OF FAITH

These souls readily learn to rely solely on the divine promises. They accustom themselves to look at things only by the obscure light of faith and little by little they begin to distinguish its subtle rays with more clarity. Then they observe that they can be guided with all security if they attend to that pallid light "as to a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." [1]

Guided by faith and scarcely adverting to it, though they think themselves in darkness, they never falter, while others who are filled with pompous science often stumble.[2] Thus it often happens that many persons in good faith deceive themselves into thinking some things licit when actually they are not so; but these souls, in the midst of their darkness, possess such perspicacity that they never

1 II Pet. 1:19.
2 Ecclus. 37:18.

permit themselves to be led astray by the illusions of others. In spite of their extreme docility, in the face of dangerous counsel they remain immovable, saying: It is not lawful.

It is the Spirit of knowledge, understanding, and counsel who governs them and, although He manifests Elimself obscurely, actually He is "holy, one, manifold, subtile, eloquent, active, undefiled, sure, sweet, loving that which is good, quick, . . . gentle, kind, steadfast, assured, secure, . . . intelligible, pure."[3] fie animates, comforts, and directs them so that they remain firm amid the dreadful darkness and live in resignation. Dying amid terrible agonies in great desolation and dryness of spirit, they are ever resolved to bear with valor and love all the trials which the Beloved wishes to send.[4] With complete trust, they abandon themselves to the hands of the divine Artist that He may purify and cleanse them, cut, fashion, and polish them according to His taste, for they are living stones destined to fit perfectly in place in the heavenly Jerusalem. Instead of offering resistance to this process, the souls themselves cooperate as far as they are able in the marvelous work of their burnishment.[5]

[3] Wisd. 7:22 f.

[4] St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 34: "Our Divine Master knows well what we need; and He wishes nothing else but our sanctification. All that He sends and permits is for our good; that is to say, either for the purgation of our sins or for our growth in perfection and grace."

Jas. 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life."

[5] All of us are obliged to burnish and fashion ourselves after the pattern of the supreme cornerstone. Shortly after St. Rose of Lima had been clothed in the Dominican habit, our Lord showed her this work in a marvelous vision. He presented Himself to her to be espoused with her, but He came in the guise of a sculptor and He charged her to fashion certain blocks of marble. Since she was not able to perform such an arduous task, she excused herself to Him by saying that she knew very well how to sew and spin, but to sculpture stones, she was not able. "Do you think," Christ asked her, "that you are the only one who is commanded to occupy yourself in such rude labor?" Then He showed her an immense workshop where a great multitude of young women was employed at the same task. With great ease and zeal they were wielding, not a needle, but a chisel and hammer. That their work might be accelerated that their stones might come forth more brilliant, they watered them with many tears. Some of rhe stones were yet to be finished, but others were sculptured with such finesse and delicacy that not the slightest defect could be seen in them. In the midst of such lowly labor the young women were decked out in their best finery but, instead of being soiled with dust, they were resplendent with supernatural beauty.

We are those hard stones, filled with impurities and roughness, which must be worked and polished with great care. All of us are called to the same task of working and watering with our swear and tears this unpolished stone of our nature in order to change it into a masterpiece in which the image of Jesus Christ shines forth perfectly.

1. CONSTANCY IN TRIALS AND SPIRITUAL DRYNESS

Far from becoming discouraged and listless because of the dryness and difficulties which they experience in their good works, these souls arouse themselves to beg and plead for help from the bottom of their hearts. If they cannot even do this, because their tongues have stuck to the roof of their mouths,[6] or if they are not even able to breathe a sigh, then they wait, silent and resigned, with the eyes of their hearts fixed upon the Savior. In this state they are like a sick man before the doctor who is able to heal him, like the poor man before the rich man, like the slave in the hands of his master. Thus do they remain, with their eyes fixed on the Lord until He has compassion on them.[7] They never turn away from Him, however long He takes to hear them, for they know that it is in Him alone they can find their remedy. They take no notice of contempt or hardships, but with Job they resolutely say: "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him." [8] Silent and resigned, they wait, for they know their strength will be in silence and in hope.[9] They are dumb and they are humbled and they keep silence from good things, and their sorrow is renewed.[10]

Who can describe the agonies and fears which souls endure in that condition? Who can understand the extreme bitterness of their suffering? They seek God continually and with all the strength of their afflicted souls and they think that He hides Himself from them in anger. Where formerly they found all their delight in prayer, they now find prayer a most terrible martyrdom and they must do great violence to themselves to go to it. But they do this violence and go to prayer, because otherwise they would be hopelessly lost. They dispose themselves for meditation as usual and they find nothing but obscurity. Not a single idea occurs to them, nor any good thought. Instead, they are tormented by many horrible ideas of blasphemy, despair, and every kind of evil which is suggested to them by the enemy. Yet they persevere in their vigil, praying with

6 Lam. 4:4.
7 Ps. 122.
8 Job ij: 15.
8 Isa. 30:15.
18 Ps. 38:3.

the desires of their heart and making use of the means at hand to recollect themselves and to overcome the enemy.[11]

They make use of spiritual reading, and this sometimes gives them temporary consolation. But as soon as they close the book, they forget all that they have read. It is impossible for them to think discursively; reason is blinded and incapacitated. However much they concentrate on what they read, they neither understand what they are reading nor even know what they are doing.[12]

Then, if they are able, they cry out and sigh, thus unburdening their hearts with tender affections and sorrowful laments in which they find great relief. But sometimes they cannot do even this. The land of their hearts is so arid that it brings forth no affection; they are completely dry and they are able to say or feel nothing. They must therefore resign themselves to live in silence as long as God wishes, praying and sighing only in their hearts. They must remain in that loving gaze and attend to the mysterious work which He is secretly realizing in them, being confident that He will never abandon them.[13]

11 Poulain, *The Graces of Interior Prayer,* III, chap. 16, p. 214: "In order to shorten our time of trial we must, on the contrary, guard our recollection carefully, and pray insistently for deliverance. . . . Unhappily, it is found to be very difficult to ask to be cured of aridity; for it paralyzes and makes us incapable of every kind of petition. The devil, on his side, also dissuades you from it. He wishes to keep you in this state of suffering and darkness, and also in tepidity and dissipation, if he can do so. He trembles lest you should enter into the mystical union."

12 From this it will be seen how grievously Father Hahn erred when he stated that the obscurities experienced by St. Teresa and her inability, at times, to understand what she was reading, were signs of hysteria. How irreverently he spoke when he called her "patroness of hysterics"! With good reason was his work, *Phenomena hyster. et revel.,* placed on the Index. In this book he makes the most outrageous statements, attributing these supernatural phenomena proper to the night of the senses (which in one way or another took place in all the saints) to nervous unbalance. Cf. Joly, *Psychology of the Saints.* Although souls are at this time incapacitated for prayer, the same thing is not true of other activities.

13 To accelerate the work of the Holy Ghost, souls in this condition should approach the two great means of renewal and purification which the blood of Christ offers us in the sacraments of the Eucharist and penance. In the former they daily receive new life and new vigor; in the latter they find the mystical "fountain open to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" in which the sinner is cleansed and washed from all the impurities which the soul contracts as long as it is vitiated with the blood of the old Adam and of Eve (Zach. 13:1).

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* II, chap. 6, art. 3: "For the oftener we confess, the more we purify ourselves, the grace proper to this sacrament being purity of conscience. Thus, every confession, besides the increase of habitual grace and of the gifts, imparts also a fresh sacramental grace, that is to say, a new title to re-

What most afflicts souls at this time is the fear that their aridity may be culpable and a suspicion that their no longer feeling any consolation in the things of God may be owing to their negligence ami the indifference and coldness with which they serve Him.[14] They do not realize that the loving unrest and watchful solicitude in which they live are an effect of love and not of indifference and that their aridity, pertinacious without reason, is one of the signs that they are now beginning to enjoy a superior type of prayer in which sensible affections have no place. A terrible thing it would be if such dryness did not cause longing for God and love of retirement, but only indifference to good and the inclination to seek human consolations.[15]

ceive from God both actual graces and the aids necessary for emancipating ourselves more and more from sin."

They should also try to keep ever in mind the sufferings of the Savior, in order to animate themselves to follow in His footsteps. By associating themselves with Him, they will receive from His precious blood the energies to persevere and the purity which they need. "Although My justice can never condone sin," said eternal Wisdom to Blessed Henry Suso (chap. 20), "yet by meditating on My passion and by applying to themselves the merits therein contained, souls can in a short time free themselves of all faults and deserved sufferings and arrive at such a grade of purity that at death they are able to pass directly to heaven without passing through purgatory. Thus you see what great fruits are to be derived through meditation on My passion."

Souls should resign themselves, then, and persevere, watching and praying, trusting that God will soon give them peace or whatever is fitting. "By true resignation in a comfortless affliction," says Tauler *(Institutions,* chap, it), "even though it may not last for more than an hour, a soul can attain a higher grade of perfection than by persevering in good works for a year. ... If in the prayer which you offer to God as your cross, you do not find the strength which you desire, do not be distraught. Persevere faithfully in it because the Lord desires to purify even more the vessel of your heart before pouring into it the precious balm of His divine consolations."

La Figucra, *Summa espiritual,* tr. 3: "Let Me do what I wish, and I will give thee to enjoy at each hour and moment the manna which is most befitting to thee, if with humility and resignation you desire to receive it. . . . On arriving at this supreme abandonment to My will and pleasure, immediately and without knowing how, your soul will be so submerged and absorbed in the abyss of My divinity, that it will swoon away at My presence."

14 Thus they exclaim with St. Bernard: "God has departed in anger from His servant. Hence the sterility of my soul and the lack of devotion which afflicts me. How dry my heart has become! It is coagulated like milk; like earth without rain. It cannot even shed tears of compunction, so hard has it become! I no longer find delight in the Psalms nor do I gain any profit from reading, any delight in prayer, or any fruits from meditation, as was formerly the case. What has become of that rapture of spirit, that serenity of soul, and that peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?" *(Sermo 54 in Cant.,* no. 8.)

15 *Dark Night of the Soul,* I, IX: "Ordinarily the memory is centered upon God, with painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but is backsliding. . . . And in such a case it is evident that this lack of sweetness and this

J. SIGNS OF THE CALL TO CONTEMPLATION

The true signs that God is calling a soul to contemplation are these: (1) the obscurity and dryness which incapacitate the soul for meditation, in which it formerly found light and comfort, and which prevent it from discursive prayer and any feeling of affection; (2) the horror which the soul has for any kind of distraction or dissipation so that neither these two imperfections nor an excessive liberty of the senses can be offered as culpable sources of aridity; (3) far from seeking relief in any form of legitimate recreation, the soul is more and more desirous of recollection and solitude. Secretly drawn to it by God through loving anxiety and painful solicitude, the soul is unable to rid itself of this yearning and anxious resolution. As a result, the recreations which it cannot avoid serve only to increase its sadness and its love of retirement, to which it feels itself drawn by a certain hidden force. (4) It experiences in its heart a great emptiness in regard to all things; for human things, because they disgust it; for divine things, because the soul is deprived of all lights and sensible affections and is not yet capable of feeling and enjoying things purely spiritual. Yet, though it cannot feel them, the soul is attracted to divine things by an invisible power. From this comes that perpetual yearning which keeps the soul restless and makes it seek a sure and safe guide.

This yearning, this restless desire, this continual impulse toward God, together with that peaceful, simple, and loving gaze by which the soul seeks to remain perpetually in the divine presence, without thinking of anything in particular but loving in silence and attending to God's action, these are a certain sign that the soul has been called to contemplation. And that soul will soon experience contemplation very clearly if it takes care not to stifle those impulses, but to encourage them by continual recollection, frequent self-examination, and ardent aspirations.[10]

aridity come not from weakness and lukewarmness; for it is the nature of lukewarmness not to care greatly or to have any inward solicitude for the things of God."

16Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 22: "Persist in this interior captivity and abandonment, diligently taking care that you desire nothing at all without necessity; not leaving the house needlessly, not thinking on vain things, and speaking only when necessary. Attend to all thy projects and works with extreme care and learn what God expects of thee and in what manner. Let your prayer be continual, neither adding to it nor shortening it; in a word, *Thy will be done. . . .* Abandon all solici-

On applying itself to prayer, the soul is able to think of nothing in particular, but in the midst of its great emptiness it possesses a general, vague, and loving gaze which holds it absorbed without its realizing what is happening to it. This gaze fills the soul with very salutary effects which are as strong as they are imperceptible.[17] Without even knowing it, the soul is already in the state of true infused contemplation.

Now is aroused that thought, that obscure and delicate light which serves as a guide and to which the soul must attend unceasingly if it does not wish to lose it. It increases this light as best it can by its continuous presence in God. It perseveres in prayer, sighing and waiting, and is never repulsed by aridity or refusals. If the soul acts otherwise, the light by which it was guided will be extinguished immediately and then, should the soul wish to knock again, it will be a long time before it is heard, if, indeed, the doors are not closed to it forever.

Therefore the soul must pray with magnanimity and perseverance, conforming to the divine will in all things, indifferent to both

tude, both interior and exterior, and be careful that in celebrating a perpetual Sabbath to the Lord thy God, you place no obstacle to His divine Majesty which would prevent Him from perfecting His work in thee. If it is necessary to perform any exterior work, take care at the same time to maintain a watchful presence in God."

Blosius, *Inst, spir.,* chaps. 3, 4, 5, *passim:* "The ascetic should unceasingly seek to acquire a holy introspection. He should avoid the vagaries of the mind because otherwise it would be impossible to arrive at union with God. . . . Let him direct himself to God, not with violence, but peacefully, simply, and lovingly. When he is accustomed to this exercise, he will see that it is not difficult and ultimately he will succeed in attending to God and divine things with as much facility as he lives and breathes. Let him see God as present in all his parts, but especially in the center of his soul, where He remains hidden from the senses, for He is truly a hidden God (Isa. 45:15). The ascetic should never abandon this exercise because of incapacity or the difficulty which it causes in a beginner. . . . Let him make himself apt for this introversion, and make use of frequent ardent ejaculations. . . . The assiduous use of aspirations and ejaculatory prayers, together with true mortification and abnegation, is a most certain guide which quickly and easily leads to perfection and the mystical divine union."

[17] *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 14: "But here it must be made clear that this general knowledge whereof we arc speaking is at times so subtle and delicate, particularly when it is most pure and simple and perfect, most spiritual and most interior, that, although the soul be occupied therein, it can neither realize it nor perceive it. This is most frequently the case when we can say that it is in itself most clear, perfect and simple; . . . unusually pure and far removed from other particular kinds of knowledge and intelligence, which the understanding or the senses might fasten upon."

consolation and suffering, and seeking nothing other than to please God.[18] So, faithful souls exclaim without ceasing, from the depths of an afflicted heart: "Thy will, not mine, be done, O Lord. Teach me Thy ways." Even in their greatest sufferings, instead of seeking human consolation, they bury themselves in their hearts in order to purify themselves more and more, saying with the Psalmist: "My soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God, and was delighted, and was exercised, and my spirit swooned away. . . . And I meditated in the night with my own heart: and I was exercised and I swept my spirit."[18]

4. SPIRITUAL SILENCE AND MYSTICAL SLEEP

When faithful souls find themselves totally abandoned, arid, cold, mute, lacking affection, and unable to give vent to a single sigh, they raise their dim and darkened eyes to heaven and, directed by the obscure light of faith, they await mercy in silence.[20] As they wait, sweetly enraptured and forgetful of all things, speaking not a word nor hearing nor seeing anything at all, they find themselves in a deep and profound silence which is at times changed into a mysterious sleep. Sometimes they pass entire hours in this condition, but to them it does not seem long because they experience a special attraction for that state.

In the midst of the obscurity and silence which prevents them

[18] Jas. 5:13: "Is any of you sad? Let him pray. Is he cheerful in mind? Let him sing."

[18] Ps. 76:4-7.

[20] Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 8: "The more simple, pure, and naked in faith, so much the more praiseworthy, noble, and meritorious it is. This faith merits that God Himself in Himself, in His divine Essence, should be manifested to the soul in many wonderful ways."

Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, chap. 15: "Hence it clearly follows that, when the soul has completely purified and voided itself of all forms and images that can be apprehended, it will remain in this pure and simple light, being transformed therein into a state of perfection. For, though this light never fails in the soul, it is not infused into it because of the creature forms and veils wherewith the soul is veiled and embarrassed; but if these impediments and these veils were wholly removed . . . , the soul would then find itself in a condition of pure detachment and poverty of spirit, and, being simple and pure, would be transformed into simple and pure Wisdom, which is the Son of God. For the enamoured soul finds that that which is natural has failed it, and it is then imbued with that which is Divine, both naturally and supernaturally, so that there may be no vacuum in its nature."

This refers, as St. John of the Cross says at the beginning of the chapter, to the progressives whom God is beginning to bring into the supernatural knowledge of contemplation.

from seeing anything concretely or in detail, if they do not see a sudden brilliant flash of light which momentarily dissipates the darkness and fills them with ineffable consolations, at least they see something which they cannot describe: a tenuous, wavering, and most subtle light which enables them to know how greatly they are indebted to God and how necessary it is that they be resigned if they are to reap the copious fruits of all these trials. Without disclosing anything in detail, this light leaves them perfectly instructed regarding the fulfillment of their duties and, though it seems to be a very tenuous light, it inflames them with zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of souls. Hence, although these souls were fearful of losing time and of having actually been asleep, they soon realize from the effects of this sleep that actually they were never more vigilant or more active. They have come forth from that sleep reanimated, possessing greater valor for the fulfillment of the divine will in all things.

After the prolonged phases of obscurity and spiritual silence, this is the first mystical sleep of the obscure night of the senses. In it, souls are fortified; they receive new vigor and life and are prepared for the coming of the dawn. They are disposed for the endurance of the terrible trials which yet await them in this prolonged obscurity amid the dreads and fears of the night.[21]

Further Trials and Contradictions

As souls progress in illumination and union and as they become stronger, so also are usually increased the trials whereby they are purified of all stains and traces of the dust of earth. But since these souls are now more powerful and better instructed in the science of the saints, they do not walk with such faltering steps nor are they so likely to perish, to wander off, or to fall as they were in the beginning. Still, the enemy obstinately pursues them, now disturbing them with suggestions of mistrust, now plaguing them with vain presumptions or deceitful promises. Likewise the world lures them with its false delights or stigmatizes them with ridicule and disdain and condemns them by every type of the specious reasoning of carnal prudence. Even their own passions are let loose and manifest

[21] Cant. 3:8.

themselves now more lively and agitated than ever before. But the greater the danger, so much the more do these souls, amid heartfelt sighs and with their eyes firmly fixed on the light of faith, cry out from their lacerated heart: "Lord, save us, we perish!" [22]

I. TEMPTATIONS, CONTRADICTIONS, AND DERISION

At times the most wise divine Doctor, instead of extending to them His merciful hand, permits these souls in the midst of their torment to walk or creep along by themselves and even to stumble and falter. He does this so that they may better realize their own weakness and misery. Sometimes He even lets them suffer a little fall, although He secretly holds them by the hand so that their hurt will be light and will work to their greater profit, for "we know that for those who love God all things work together unto good." [23] Then He quickens their faith so that they see and realize how abominable are even the slightest faults committed against so holy and lovable a God. Again, He sometimes permits others to look upon them with penetrating gaze and to censure them unmercifully for defects or carelessness, and in this way these souls learn truly to despise themselves, for they know that they are treated as they deserve. Souls see themselves better when their failings are known and censured by all.[24]

When souls are thus confounded, they are confirmed in true self-knowledge and taught to place their hope in God alone. Far from being dismayed, as are the presumptuous or the timid, they are inflamed with a purer love of the supreme Good whom they have offended and they burn with an ardent desire to make amends and to please Him. Therefore the more angry He appears, the more they reverence and love Him with a sincere filial love, grieving over their faults and cultivating a holy hatred for themselves for having acted so evilly and having been so despicable. To make as much satisfaction as they can, they castigate themselves with more arduous penances and they joyfully accept every kind of scorn and ridicule,

22 Matt. 8:zy.

23 Rom. 8:28.

24 St. Augustine, *Confessions,* IX, chap. 8: "Just as friends corrupt us by their adulation, so frequently our enemies correct us by their criticisms. But Thou, () Lord, dost repay them according to the will and intention which they had, and not according to what Thou hast effected through them."

contradictions, calumnies, and persecutions which come to them in abundance, though they know not how or whence. Whatever befalls them, they deem it small when compared with the great desire they have of atoning to God and repairing the evil they have done.

Thus they acquire that true interior peace in which, instead of fleeing labors and contempt, they desire them and seek them as eagerly as a miser seeks a treasure.[25] But they should not weary themselves in seeking such things; it is better for them to accept with complete resignation all the crosses that Providence sends them. They will find these in abundance, even where they least expect them.[28] Because of their fervent desire to fulfill faithfully all their obligations and because of their particular psychological state of recollection in God, they may sometimes be inadvertently careless, forgetful of certain details, and, perhaps, even commit certain faults which they cannot correct, no matter how strenuously they try. These things are an abundant source of complaint and severe reprimands and cause souls to suffer keenly, for they judge themselves culpable but find that they are helpless to remedy their light imperfections. The eagerness to correct them does nothing but aggravate those very imperfections.

What is most important at this stage is that souls be not dismayed. They must be made to realize that the work of perfection is not the work of a day, but of a lifetime. It is not to be attained bare-handed, but through humility, patience, perseverance in prayer, and trust in God.[27] Hence, as long as they feel themselves incapable, they should

25 *Imitation of Christ,* III, chap. 25: "If thou arrive at complete contempt of self, then shalt thou enjoy peace in abundance."

28 Sec II Tim., 3:12: "And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." The Lord Himself, says the *Imitation* (III, 3), is the "one who tests all devout souls."

Lallcmant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* V, II, art. 1: "Whoever is resolved to lead an interior life, and to be really spiritual and a man of prayer, must expect that when he has reached a certain point, people will cry out against him; he will have adversaries, and other contradictions; but in the end God will give him peace, and will make everything turn out to his profit and the advancement of his soul."

See Taulcr, *Institutions,* chap. 11.

27 *Dark Night of the Soul,* I, chap. 5: "There are others who are vexed with themselves when they observe their own imperfectness, and display an impatience that is not humility; so impatient arc they about this that they would fain be saints in a day. Many of these persons purpose to accomplish a great deal and make grand resolutions; yet, as they are not humble and have no misgivings about themselves, the more resolutions they make, the greater is their fall and the greater their annoyance, since they have not the patience to wait for that which God will give

increase their magnanimity all the more and trust entirely in Him who is waiting for them to realize their own nothingness, to abandon themselves without reserve into His arms, and to make Him their all, for this cannot be done without their cooperation.[23]

What most afflicts these souls is their fear of guilt and not the harsh treatment they receive. Indeed they rejoice in the latter; not because they dare to glory in their infirmities (see II Cor. 12:9) which they endure for Christ (for they do not deem themselves worthy of such an honor), but because at last they see themselves treated as they deserve and recognized for what they truly are. With such simplicity and without taking account of themselves, they[28]

them when it pleases Him; . . . Some souls, on the other hand, are so patient in this matter of the progress which they desire, that God would gladly see them less so."

28 Grou, *Manuel,* p. 106: "The holiest souls are not necessarily those who commit the fewest faults, but those who are the most valiant, the most generous, and who love to do the greatest violence to themselves. . . . Spiritual masters tell us that God sometimes permits the greatest saints to fall into certain defects which, no matter how hard they try, they are unable to correct. He does this precisely to make them realize their own weakness and to show them what they would be without grace. In this way, also, He prevents them from becoming proud because of the favors they have received. . . . The child who falls down when he tries to walk alone, returns to his mother with greater affection and learns not to stray from her. . . . When God asks anything of us, we must not refuse Him under the pretext of the many faults we would commit in performing it. It is better to do the good imperfectly, rather than omit it altogether."

Therefore we should not be upset or too sad over the faults that we are unable to correct, as are the presumptuous who are disturbed and dismayed at seeing their own weakness, but we should draw new strength from our weakness so that we will not aggravate our faults by greater ones. True humility is peaceful and trusting. It gently places in God all the confidence which we cannot place in ourselves.

"When I find that I have committed certain inadvertent faults," savs a soul well experienced in these things, "I rise up again with great facility and with the intention of dying rather than fall into that fault again. On such occasions I never feel any disturbance or dejection because I know that our Lord is most kind toward this type of fault. I firmly believe that a loving countenance and a peaceful and joyful attitude move Him more than one of extreme anguish, which sometimes hides a good deal of self-love." Says our Lord in *Espinas del alnia (Dial.* IV): "Learn to draw humility from your faults, and not bitterness and distress. For you give Me more pain and offend Me more by the disturbance with which you suffer these faults than by the faults themselves."

St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 50: "For, though the soul is conscious of its own wretchedness and it distresses us to see what we are and our wickedness seems to us to be of the worst possible kind . . . and we feel it very deeply, yet genuine humility does not produce inward turmoil, nor does it cause unrest in the soul, or bring it darkness or aridity; on the contrary, it cheers it and produces in it the opposite effects—quietness, sweetness and light. . . . In that other humility, which is the work of the devil, the soul has not light enough to do anything good and thinks of God as of one who is always wielding fire and sword."

triumph over all their enemies, they disconcert the calculations of carnal prudence, and they draw upon themselves the sympathy and even the admiration and applause of many sincere souls.[29]

But this is itself another difficult trial, for such souls find the greatest torment in being esteemed and praised. Deference to themselves horrifies them because they consider it a sacrilegious theft when anyone attributes to them any good thing. They know very well that, if they possess anything of good, it has been given them by God and to Him should go the acknowledgment.[30]

In this way souls acquire a sincere and solid humility and not that superficial virtue which was theirs in the beginning. Now they are truly purified of the stain of all self-esteem and they are well established in all virtue, especially the virtues of meekness and modesty. They have become like Him who is meek and humble of heart. Taking up His yoke, they will find rest for their soul.[31]

2. INTERIOR STRUGGLES

This phase of their development is followed by the formidable interior struggle which they must continually wage in order to keep their passions in subjection. At this time their passions seem indomitable and irrepressible. Yet rarely is this struggle outwardly manifested, even by the slightest change of countenance. Even under the greatest afflictions they do not alter, and one would never suspect their interior struggles. Indeed, looking upon these persons and seeing them so peaceful, affable, tender, wearing a modest smile on their lips (never gloomy as are those of fictitious virtue), one would think that they are at least very insensible.

The truth of the matter is that, far from being insensible, such souls possess a sensibility more delicate and exquisite than that of anyone else. God Himself quickens this sensibility in them so that

29 Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* II, 6: "I fear more my own action and that of my friends than that of my enemies. There is no prudence so great as that which offers no resistance to enemies, and which opposes to them only a simple abandonment [to God]. This is to run before the wind, and as there is nothing else to be done, to keep quiet and peaceful. There is nothing that is more entirely opposed to worldly prudence than simplicity; it turns aside all schemes without comprehending them, without so much as a thought about them. The divine action makes the soul take such just measures as to surprise those who want to take it by surprise themselves."

30 See *Interior Castle,* VI, i; Hansen, *Vida de Sta. Rosa de Lima,* I, 8.

31 Matt. 11:29.

they know how to conquer self, to resist themselves always, and to subdue their evil inclinations by combating them and tearing them out by the roots. Their least little faults arouse their anger. So, Sister Barbara of St. Dominic (1868) wrote to her confessor: "If I were to give vent to this feeling of fierceness, I would at any minute tear my sisters to pieces." And yet, her own sisters considered her very passive because she gave no sign of her dreadful interior and exterior trials.[32]

The repeated victories which they win over themselves and which are as glorious as they are difficult do not cause these souls to become proud but, rather, confounded. They regard only the work and the danger and not the merit. Through a holy fear of God which keeps them meek, modest, and humble, and by watching over themselves with the firm resolution to practice all the virtues well, they make a strong beginning in true wisdom. Since they know themselves intimately and despise themselves as they deserve, the eyes of their heart are illumined and cleansed (Eph. 1:18) and they can see how lovable God is. Then do they begin to love Him truly with a pure, sincere, and disinterested love.

Thus does God work upon these privileged souls and purify them in order to make them worthy confidants of the mysteries of His love. Being a pure and jealous Lover, He cannot tolerate the least stain in them nor any affection which is not directed to Himself.[33] Therefore, before Lie communicates Himself fully to them, He tries them in the crucible of temptation and subjects them to the rack of trials and contradictions so that they may come forth pure and radiant, like gold and diamonds which have been worked upon and cleaned of all dross.[34] The higher the degree of sanctity to which

32 St. Teresa, in speaking of these terrible struggles, says that not all souls are able to dissimulate their sufferings. At times they suffer such bitter interior affliction that they break forth into impatience, etc.

33 St. Augustine, *Confessions,* X, 29: "He loves Thee little, O Lord, who, together with Thee, loves anything else which he does not love on account of Thee."

34 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory, circa fin.:* "We know very well that the good and great God, before admitting any soul into His presence, destroys in it everything human and totally purifies it so that it is transformed into Himself and deified."

Fénelon, *Sentim. de piété:* "O adorable holiness of my God, how rigorous Thou art! Thou dost not recognize Thy own as long as they have the smallest opposition to Thy own purity. Beckoning them with one hand, by means of the love which Thou dost instil into their hearts to attract them to Thyself, with the other hand Thou dost restrain them with the rigors of Thy justice. These souls love Thee,

He destines the soul, or the more delicate the mission which He desires to entrust to it, the more varied and rigorous will be these trials.[86]

The purgation resulting from the voluntary penances and austerities which souls embrace when in their first fervor as well as that effected by the martyrdom which they undergo in the period of desolation and aridity and by which they seek to placate the divine wrath and castigate themselves for their sins, are as nothing when compared to that which God yet demands of them. He himself, applying His hand to the wound, subjects souls to a treatment which He alone knows how to perform, the "bath of blood and fire" which St. Catherine of Siena speaks of in her *Letters* (52). He subjects them to the entire series of passive purgations in which they feel as if they were in a huge press, constrained on every side so that they are unable to breathe. They cannot find the slightest relief and they know not whence their remedy will come. Their suffering is so intense that it seems to them they are no longer on the rack, but in the very hell of sorrow.[30]

Lord, and yet Thou desirest that they suffer. Their supplication alters not *a* bit the love which Thou dost bear them, nor does the love they bear for Thee diminish the suffering which Thou dost send them. How holy and how lovable Thou art, O divine Heart! Who could exist in the presence of a God so pure and holy! Yet this is that selfsame sanctity which sees the saints on earth afflicted with infirmities, sufferings, and persecutions, and, although He recognizes them as His own, He looks upon them with an unalterable peace. He is always able to alleviate their pains, but many times He refuses to do so. His magnanimous heart finds no better way of expressing His love than to subject His friends to these hardships."

35 Palaphox, *Varôn de deseos,* III, 8: "It will also happen to many souls that they will endure no conflict for months, or even years, at a time. But when they are most careless or even, so they think, most fervent, a conflict will break forth which is so bloody and cruel that these souls will seem to be back in the first stages. . . . Although it will be strange to them at the beginning, they will feel great valor if they have served God truly in their past life. . . . All the steps which the soul has taken in time of peace by means of its exercises, were but dispositions and defenses which have prepared for the outbreak of the war which now attacks them. . . . God permits this war on souls for the very useful effects which will follow: humility, proof by trial, exercise in spiritual things, mortification, retirement and watching, reward and perfection."

36 Ps. 30:11: "For my life is wasted with grief: and my years in sighs."

Interior Castle, VI, 1: "Oh, Jesus! How sad it is to see a soul thus forsaken, and how little, as I have said, can it gain from any earthly consolation! ... If she prays, she might as well not be doing so at all—I mean for all the comfort it will bring her, for interiorly she is incapable of receiving any comfort, nor, even when her prayer is vocal, can she understand what she is saying; while mental prayer is at such a time certainly impossible—her faculties are not capable of it. Solitude is still worse for her, though it is also torture for her to be in anyone's company or

Although this sorrow affects principally the sensitive part of the soul, there is actually no interior or exterior pain which these souls do not suffer. To their aridity, distaste, obscurity, and mortal agony are added infirmities, calumnies, and persecutions.[37] They are abandoned by good souls and even by their faithful friends; they either lack experienced guides or suffer manifest opposition from their spiritual directors who, instead of encouraging and pacifying them, begin to fill them with despondency and terror by telling them that they have been deceived.[38] Every imaginable horror suddenly rains down upon them when they least expect it. They suffer a frightful and prolonged martyrdom for God, but scarcely anyone knows it or compassionates them.[38][39]

to be spoken to; and so, despite all her efforts to conceal the fact, she becomes outwardly upset and despondent, to a very noticeable extent. Is it credible that she will be able to say what is the matter with her? The thing is inexpressible, *for* this distress and oppression are spiritual troubles and cannot be given a name. The best medicine—I do not say for removing the trouble, for I know of none for that, but for enabling the soul to endure it—is to occupy oneself with external affairs and works of charity and to hope in God's mercy, which never fails those who hope in Him."

37 Blessed Henry Suso, *Life,* chap. 23: "Until now, you have scourged yourself with your own hands and you have ceased doing so when you took compassion on yourself. But from this time on, I shall put you in the hands of others who will maltréat you and you will be helpless to defend yourself. They will make you carry a cross that is much more painful, a cross bristling with points of iron which will bring torment to your shoulders. Until today, you have been praised and admired for your voluntary mortifications; but in the future, even in the midst of your sufferings, you will be jeered, mocked, and ridiculed so that in this way you may be truly annihilated."

38 When the Venerable Francesca of the Blessed Sacrament found herself in this condition, unable to communicate to anyone the things pertaining to her soul, her holy mother, St. Teresa, appeared to her and told her: "You would suffer much more, daughter, if you did communicate these things. It was for that reason that I suffered a great deal. For, however much men may know, they cannot know how generous God is in communicating Himself to His creatures."

39 Blessed Henry Suso, *Disc, spir.,* IV: "Up to a certain point these interior sufferings cause those who persevere to be counted among the martyrs and to enjoy the prerogatives of martyrs. But the servants of God would much prefer to give their life's blood at once for Jesus Christ rather than suffer these interior temptations and trials for months or even years."

St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* III, 10: "This magnificent work is proper to holy love; no other love can effect it. But if it were given to you, O men, to know the tortures through which humanity passes during these indescribable trials, you would not hesitate to state that it is impossible to endure so much. . . . These sorrows are evident but rather than look at them, you prefer not to believe them because you are afraid to try to measure their greatness. . . . You are unwilling to endure them because they are suffered in silence and solely for the love of God."

St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 11; "I know how grievous such trials are and I think they need more courage than do many others in the world. But it has become clear to

All this scandalizes the worldly ones because they are unable to understand it. It is folly to the world, and the world cannot understand it. But this suffering is the currency used along the path of the spirit, for "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:21). Worldly souls will ask why the Lord should send such trials to souls that are faithful and that truly love Him. He sends them, first, the better to show His love for them, because those whom He loves more, He makes more like unto Himself in His sufferings so that they may also be like to Him in glory.[40] Secondly, He sends them this suffering so that they can purify them-

me that, even in this life, God does not fail to recompense them highly; . . . for it is quite certain that a single one of those hours in which the Lord has granted me to taste of Himself has seemed to me later a recompense for all the afflictions which I have endured over a long period while keeping up the practice of prayer. I believe myself that often in the early stages, and again later, it is the Lord's will to give us these tortures, . . . in order to test His lovers . . . before He trusts them with His great treasures. I believe it is for our good that His Majesty is pleased to lead us in this way so that we may have a clear understanding of our worthlessness; for the favours which come later are of such great dignity that before He grants us them He wishes us to know by experience how miserable we are, lest what happened to Lucifer happen to us also."

40 Blessed Angela de Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 50: "What is the path trod by the chosen ones? It is the path of tribulation. . . . I understood the order and reason for these things. . . . I saw how sufferings are changed into works of grace. This is not understood by the beginner, but later it is recognized. I saw the path to eternal life which is common to the elect, and there is no other way. Those who are invited to drink of the chalice of the Lord are those who seek to do the will of the Father. . . . Hence, for these sons, the bitterness of tribulation is changed into grace, sweetness, and love, because they feel how valuable are their tears. They are oppressed, but are not disturbed, because the greater the tribulation they suffer, the more they experience God and so much does their joy increase. If a man feels anxiety at the beginning of his penance, I know that joy awaits him after he has advanced."

St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 64: "If we would consider the great blessings which come to us as a result of our sufferings during the journey of this life, we would run the course of life to death without ever fleeing any kind of pain. Many are the benefits which come to us when we are afflicted. The one benefit is that in this way we are conformed to Jesus Christ. What greater treasure could a soul possess than to be clothed in His opprobrium and suffering? The other is that we are thus purified of our sins and defects in order to grow in grace and preserve that treasure unto life eternal."

Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 11: "If God sometimes hesitates to send you adversities, it is not because of your own goodness and strength, but because He knows how unworthy you are to be a soldier of Christ."

"Everyone knows," said our Lord to St. Rose of Lima, "that grace follows tribulation; they know that without the weight of affliction, they cannot arrive at the summit of grace and that their gifts increase in the measure of their labors. Do not be mistaken or deceived; this is the only stairs to paradise. There is no other way, save by the Cross, by which one can reach heaven" (Hansen, *Vida,* I, chap. 18).

selves, know themselves, be illumined, and disposed for full union and transformation.[41]

3. SOURCES OF STRENGTH

During the period when these souls seemed to be so fervent, theirs was a sensible fervor. Besides being changeable and unable to withstand desolations, sensible fervor is an impediment to the peaceful and intimate action of God because it is impetuous and disordered. To experience the purely spiritual light, souls must be emptied of all sensible light just as later on they must be reduced to darkness in regard to all created light, however spiritual, in order to withstand the most pure uncreated Light. Hence those two terrible nights, that of the senses and that of the spirit.[42]

With the disappearance of sensible light, sensible consolations must also vanish, so that the mysterious touches of the Holy Ghost can be felt. Therefore the Lord said to His disciples that, unless they were deprived of His visible presence, they could not receive the

41 Weiss, *Apologie,* IX, 6: "We deceive ourselves and do ourselves great harm if we think that it was easy for the saints to rid their veins of the corrupt blood of Adam, to withdraw from the world exteriorly and interiorly, and to open to themselves the road to eternal life. We often imagine that the saints were such from their very birth or that they achieved the place they occupy in heaven without any efforts. . . . On the contrary, as St. Paul says with great sorrow: 'Unhappy man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. 7:24.) No one has ever seen the extent of that hard struggle which extends 'unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow' (Hcb. 4:12). . . . God calls all men, the saints as well as ourselves, to the serious struggle. To all He sends work, saying: 'Separate the precious from the vile' (Jer. 15:19) so that your life may become 'more precious than gold which is tried by the fire' (I Pet. 1:7)."

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* III, 8: "God prefers a soul transformed by sorrow to a soul transformed by love, although it is true that the sorrow experienced by the soul at the sight of the divine afflictions cannot be other than love which, absolutely speaking, is more perfect. By means of sorrow the soul is greatly exercised in the love of neighbor and it becomes resplendent with zeal for the salvation of souls. This makes it weep for the sins of others and be consumed with a desire for their salvation. The Word also prefers the work of sorrow to that of love because the first is a type of martyrdom through which souls are made like the crucified Savior. . . . Love is undoubtedly more pleasing, but since we are in this world to purify ourselves, the time is to be spent, not in joy, but in weeping and suffering for God."

42 *Dark Night of the Soul,* I, 8: "And thus the one night or purgation will be sensual, wherein the soul is purged according to sense, which is subdued to the spirit; and the other is a night or purgation which is spiritual; wherein the soul is purged and stripped according to the spirit, and subdued and made ready for the union of love with God."

divine Consoler.[43] By means of His withdrawal, their tender and affectionate love was purified and spiritualized so that they could undergo without failure the trials they had yet to suffer and they could experience the profound mysteries of the Divinity directly or, at least, through the holy humanity which was then invisible.[44]

During their darkness and aridity and with the help of the tenuous spiritual light which they unconsciously receive, souls are able to discover and correct innumerable imperfections which they had not perceived during their sensible fervor. Only thus can they acquire true humility and the requisite purity.[45] In addition to self-love which manifests itself in their desire for gifts and divine consolations and prevents them from arriving at true union, they usually possess a hidden presumption, together with a certain regard for themselves and their superficial virtues and an attachment to their own judgments and their own will. All of this renders true progress difficult (for true progress consists in the total abandonment of self to the action of God), and leads them to ruin, for it causes them to resist the Holy Ghost.[46] This is what happens to many deluded

[43] John 16:7: "But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

[44] "If it was expedient that I withdraw from My apostles," said our Lord to Blessed Henry Suso (*Eternal Wisdom,* X), "the better to dispose them for the reception of the Holy Ghost, how much more harmful will be association with men? . . . Their fickle love and useless conversations weaken the fervor of religious life." In his *Disciplina spiritualis,* Suso says: "All the powers, labors, precepts, and examples of Jesus Christ were ordained to teach His disciples how to be interior men and to keep their souls pure so that the light of truth might shine forth in them. When He saw that the apostles, in their imperfection, were seeking after the external man and were thus rendering themselves incapable of seeking the supreme Good, He was obliged to leave them and deprive them of His corporeal presence. This fact ought to rid us of all uncertainty and make us understand how, in a certain sense, eternal Wisdom Himself, by His human presence, was an obstacle to the perfection of those who were so attached to Him. With even more reason can we say that the creatures of this world will prevent the servants of God from arriving at perfection in the spiritual life."

Blessed John of Avila, *Espiritu Santo,* I: "The Holy Ghost will not come until you have rid yourself of all excessive love of creatures, for He wishes to be with you alone."

[45] St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* V. 12: "O purity! Purity! It is nothing other than humility in action. There never was and never will be humility without purity, nor purity without humility."

[46] St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chap. 11: "In spite of having risen to the life of grace, the soul remains so stained and self-centered that, in order to return to the primitive state in which it was created by God, it needs no less than all those divine operations of which we have spoken."

souls that remain full of pride even after great penances. They abandon the yoke of obedience and perish miserably.

When sensible fervor ceases and souls experience a deathly aridity; when they see themselves surrounded by nothing but dangers, difficulties, defects, temptations, and evil inclinations; when they find themselves the victims of many fears and filled with darkness, lacking the ability to do anything at all: then it is that they truly learn to distrust themselves, to seek someone who can guide them, and to implore divine aid with true humility. No longer do they appropriate to themselves the lights and favors they have received from the Lord.[47] Now all their hope lies in perseverance in prayer, cost what it may. If they lessen their prayer or if they are too much distracted by external things, however good these things may be in themselves or however lofty the intention with which they are done, then these souls are much exposed to be lost and to extinguish that invisible light which was leading them on to solitude, there to experience the motion of the Holy Ghost. But if they let themselves be guided by the mysterious force which moves them on to recollection, they will be so strengthened that they will never fall away.

How can souls sustain all these trials without weakening? "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."[48] "For when I am weak, then am I powerful."[49] With great ardor they hasten to seek aid from Him who alone can give it to them. In profound recollection they are filled with valor and even with joy. He who calls them to solitude, does so to console them, strengthen them, and enrich them. There, either secretly or manifestly, He speaks to their hearts the words of life and nourishment.[80] Then, in the measure that their

47 La Figuera, *Suma espirit.,* I, 5: "Do not take temptations as punishments, for they are not always so, and when they are, they must be taken as mercies. By means of temptations, our Lord obliges souls to come to Him to seek His help, to recognize their danger, to do penance, to realize that they live in the midst of enemies, and a thousand other blessings which our Lord is able to draw out of these temptations. Hence, the Holy Ghost says: 'He who has not been tempted, what does he know?' "

Imitation, I, 13; II, 1: "Often we do not know what we can do, but temptations show us what we are. . . . In temptations and tribulations it is proved what progress a man is making, and there also is the greater merit and virtue is the more evident. . . . How will your patience be crowned, if you meet with no adversities?"

48 Phil. 4:13.

49 II Cor. 12: to.

,0 Osee 2:14.

labors increase, their consolations are also increased.[51] Amid the greatest tribulations, they remain serene and confident, overflowing with joy [62] and desiring to suffer even more for God.[53]

Such desires arc never satiated, but are quickened with new fuel and, when souls thus fortified seem to weaken under the weighty burden of their labors and the waters of tribulation have risen to their chins, then they cry out: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us." [54]

In great afflictions and temptations, when they see themselves weakening and lacking any power, they hasten to satiate and re-animate themselves in the fountain of living water where they drink of the torrents of grace and strength. They hurry to the Eucharist, the sacrament of love, the center of the mystical life, wherein the most sweet Savior gives Himself to them as sustenance, life, and power for the soul. The fortitude which they receive in that divine food enables them to travel without any rest, night and day, to the holy mountain of God.[55]

Through their own revivification they know by experience that he who worthily partakes of this bread will live forever, for he will live in Jesus and through Jesus, as Jesus Himself lives through the Father.[56] Therefore in all their tribulations and needs they hurry with eager desires to the sacred tabernacle as to their secure refuge. There they find protection against their enemies, relief from all their evils and pains, strength and power to conquer themselves, to despoil themselves totally of the old man, and to be reclothed in the new.[5T]

51 See II Cor. 1:5.

82 II Cor. 7:4.

68 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* I, 15: "By reason of its generous efforts never to deny God any type of sacrifice, the soul overflows with joy, after the fashion of St. Paul, in the midst of its sufferings. It realizes very well that by means of those sufferings it is purified of the stains of the flesh and the spirit and that, for the glory of God, it has begun to be adorned in the ornaments of the Spouse."

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, 17: "The soul desirous of following the Lord may have to endure great sufferings. But these sufferings, however great they may be, bring it fewer pains than consolations."

54 Rom. 8:35, 37.

55 III Kings 19:8.

86 John 6:58.

82 Bellamy, *op. cit.,* p. 256: "The Church knows very well that without Communion it is morally impossible to conserve the supernatural life indefinitely, just

Thus fortified and filled with confidence, they wait without vacillation or fear for the only one who can save them. If it should be necessary, they will wait a year, two years, five years, and sometimes even twenty years. This prolonged waiting, though it afflicts them and is so grievous,[58] does not prevent them from saying: "Yet after the darkness, I wait for the light." [59] The light of understanding which strengthens and directs them amid the obscurities of faith gradually increases in splendor. What formerly seemed to them so tenuous and delicate, now fills them with almost incredible clarity, in the measure that their natural reason is purified of its gross inferior lights. Visibly enriched with the sublime gifts of wisdom and understanding, they see that those apparent darknesses of divine origin were in reality torrents of true light which enlighten and dazzle weak eyes but which to healthy eyes appear a thousand times clearer than the midday light. They see that the mysterious whispering which they perceived in their silence was the sweet voice of the Beloved who invites them to a most intimate concourse.[60] They now realize that their refreshing sleep was a sublime reality which filled them with life and was the soul's rest in the divine arms. Now they know that night is illumined to a most clear day, that the darkness of God is His own light and in it are found ineffable delights.[61]

as without corporal food we cannot preserve the life of the body for very long. All life requires regular nourishment, not only for its normal expansion, but also for its simple conservation. If the life of the body needs material bread, the divine life of the soul also needs some other kind of nourishment proportionate to its nature; that is, a divine food."

Therefore, although the precept of the Church commands no more than the paschal Communion, the desire of the Church, as formulated by the Council of Trent (Session XXII, can. 6) and later on by Pope Pius X, is that all the faithful should strive to receive Communion daily.

Taulcr, *Institutions,* chap. 38: "Of all the exercises which one can perform, there is none judged to be so excellent, so divine, so certain and secure for attaining the supreme Good and for attaining intimate union with God as to receive frequently and devoutly the most holy Sacrament. . . . No place else is there to be found such copious grace as here, where the senses and the faculties of the soul are recollected and united by the power and efficacy of the bodily presence of our Lord, Jesus Christ. . . . Those especially who are most inclined to external things and disposed to many falls are raised up and brought to an appreciation of interior things, they are thereby rid of all temporal impediments, they are inflamed with heavenly desires, and, by the divine dwelling which God takes up in them, they are fortified for celestial things."

58 Prov. 13:12.
09 Job 17:12.
80 Cant. 2:10-14.
61 Ps. 138:11 f.

Then, with the help of these gifts and through the obscure light of faith, they discover the focus of the eternal light.

So, at the dawn of a new day and the manifestation of the morning star to their intellect, that star for which they have eagerly waited, these souls are filled with new life, ardor, joy, and heavenly delights which, though lasting but for a moment, make them consider as well spent all the efforts they have made. They are convinced now that all the pleasures of the world taken together are nothing more than a vile and miserable shadow when compared with those of heaven.[82] Thus are souls reanimated for suffering and for working and they will accomplish marvels of virtue by means of their divine powers.

APPENDIX

i. Characteristics of Perfect Prayer

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 62:

The law of prayer is the law of unity. Prayer demands the entire man and not merely a part of him. It claims the whole heart and, if only a portion is given, a man achieves nothing. . . . He must give his all if he wishes to enjoy the fruit of this tree, because temptations beset a divided heart. Pray, and pray assiduously. The more you pray, the more enlightened will you be and the more profound, the more sublime, and more evident will be your contemplation of the supreme Good. The more sublime and profound this contemplation, the more ardent will be your love; the more ardent your love, the more delightful your joy and the more extensive your comprehension. Then will increase your inner capacity for comprehension; you will arrive at the plenitude of light and will receive that knowledge which, by nature alone, you were not capable of—the secrets which were beyond your capacity. . . . Do you wish to receive the Holy Ghost? Then pray. The apostles were praying when He descended upon them. . . . It is prayer that frees us from the enemy, illumines and purifies us, and unites us to God. Prayer is the manifestation of God and of men. This manifestation is the perfect humility which is found in the knowledge of God. . . . To know God's allness and man's nothingness; that is perfection. . . . If you are de-

[82] St. Teresa, *Life,* X, XI: "When a soul is in its early stages of growth and God grants it this favour, it really thinks there is nothing more left for it to desire and it counts itself well recompensed for all the service it has done Him. . . . Blessed are their labours, which even here, in this life, have such abundant recompense."

prived of the grace of sensible fervor, be as assiduous in prayer and activity as you were in the days of great fervor. . . . The sacrifice most perfect and most pleasing in the divine eyes is to follow the same path with the help of His grace, even when this grace ceases to be ardent. . . . If, through your own fault (as happens most of the time) or through any plan of the eternal mercy which disposes you for the most sublime things, you lose that sensible fervor, be steadfast in prayer, in watching, and in charity. If tribulation or temptation comes upon you with its purifying power, persevere and do not weaken; resist, combat, and triumph by dint of importunity and violence. God will bring back ardor to your soul; do your part, which He will make His own. Violent prayer, which a person draws forth from his torn and lacerated bowels, is most powerful before God. Persevere in prayer, and you will begin to feel God's presence more fully than ever before. . . . Empty yourself; let Him take over all of you, and He will give you a great light which will enable you to see yourself and see Him.

St. Catherine of Siena, *Life,* III, 4:

A soul cannot truly possess God if it does not give Him its entire heart, without division of affections. And it cannot give its whole heart to God without the help of humble prayer in which it recognizes very clearly its own nothingness. It must give itself over to prayer until it has been acquired as a habit. By continual prayer, virtues grow and are fortified; without it, they weaken and disappear.

2. Prayer and the Mystical Life

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* VI, 1:

Prayer and mystical theology are one and the same thing. . . . Speculative theology makes learned men and doctors; mystical theology makes ardent lovers of God. . . . It is called *mystical* because its communication is secret and nothing is spoken in it, save from heart to heart by a certain communication which cannot be transferred to others who do not possess it. . . . Mystical theology and prayer are nothing other than a conversation in which the soul is lovingly communicating with God, speaking to His lovable goodness in order to be united and joined to Him.

3. Important Counsels

La Figuera, *Suma espiritual,* I, 6:

The soul wanders much in the path of prayer if it does not begin to walk in it completely free of all self-interest. . . . God's way is to give

Himself without measure to those who do not seek gifts and consolations in serving Him. . . . Let the soul enter the service of God with a firm resolution not to have any likes or dislikes . . . for the first fervors will not endure. . . . Such a soul will make progress only by struggling against sensuality. . . . But it should take care not to expect to root out in two days the bitter and deep roots of its appetites. . . . Such daring presumption makes the soul discontinue many of the things which it has begun. It cannot fly along the way when it has no wings, but it must walk, step by step, according to the powers it possesses. . . . It must learn to walk with faltering steps and must not give up; because if it does not yet have this art, which is the most difficult, it places itself in great danger. . . . What the soul must learn at this stage is to beg pardon without being admired or embittered or dismayed; but it must have humility and compunction, and must lift its spirits as best it can. . . . Let the soul advance according to God's measure, without pressing forward or lingering in any exercise, no matter how holy it may be. . . . Let it be steadfast in its spiritual exercises and esteem them highly. . . . It should value whatever devotions will help it to love God more and beware of that presumptuous spirit which says that in devotion there is to be found no solid virtue. . . . In making the resolution to serve God perfectly, one must not be ashamed to show it . . . no matter what his equals may say. . . . They may laugh, but he truly serves God.

4. Ceaseless Struggles

St. Francis de Sales, *The Devout Life,* I, chap. 5:

Ordinary purifying and healing, be it of the body or the soul, is only effected little by little, going on by degrees, with pain and labor. . . . The soul which rises from sin to devotion is compared to the dawn of morning which drives not away the darkness instantaneously, but by degrees. . . . Courage and patience are necessary in this enterprise. Alas, how much are those souls to be pitied who, having exercised themselves a little in devotion and seeing themselves the subject of many imperfections, begin to be troubled, disquieted, and discouraged, almost letting their hearts yield to the temptation of abandoning everything and returning back! . . . The exercise of cleansing the soul can end only with life itself. We must not, then, be troubled by our imperfections, for perfection consists in combatting them, and we cannot combat them without seeing them nor overcome them without encountering them. Our victory lies, not in not feeling them, but in not consenting to them. To be disturbed by them is not to consent to them. Indeed, it is neces-

sary for the exercise of our humility that sometimes we should be wounded in the spiritual combat; but we are never conquered unless we lose either our life or our courage. . . . "Deliver me, O Lord," said David (Ps. 54:9), "from cowardice and faint-heartedness." It is a great advantage for us in this war if by fighting always, we can always be conquerors.

5. Desire for Consolations

Blosius, *Inst.,* chap. 7:

We can certainly ask God for consolations and sensible fervor, especially at the beginning of the spiritual life, so that, tasting the sweetness of divine grace, we shall better and more promptly renounce all vices and attach ourselves to Him as our supreme Good. Yet there is a certain imperfection in so doing which is prejudicial to lawful abnegation. . . . We must at any cost let God work in us and let Him give to us what He wishes, when He wishes, and how He wishes.

Rodriguez, *Ejercicio de perfection,* I, 8, chap. 24:

Spiritual delights are very good and profitable if we know how to use them well. Therefore, when the Lord grants them, they should be received with gratitude. But if one seeks these consolations and desires them only for the satisfaction which they afford, for the delight and pleasure which the soul experiences in them, then that is a vice and disordered self-love; . . . it is the vice of spiritual gluttony.

Hoyos, *Vida,* p. 329:

The Lord gave me to understand that it was not displeasing to Him that in my afflictions I should seek some consolation from my spiritual fathers. He Himself sought it from His disciples, although He did not find it. I find it when it is His will; but if it be His will that I should suffer, then He will fill the greatest joy with the greatest sorrow.

Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom,* XV:

In time of affliction, remember My consolations; and when I console you, do not forget the trials which you have had to undergo. This is My way of teaching you not to be extravagant when you are enjoying My grace and of not letting you become dejected when you are in the midst of affliction.

6. The Simple Loving Gaze an Unconscious Rest

Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, chap. 15:

When the spiritual person cannot meditate, let him learn to be still in God, fixing his loving attention upon Him, in the calm of his understanding, although he may think himself to be doing nothing. For thus, little by little and very quickly, Divine calm and peace will be infused into his soul, together with a wondrous and sublime knowledge of God, enfolded in Divine love. And let him not meddle with forms, meditations and imaginings, or with any kind of reflections, lest the soul be disturbed, . . . And if, as we have said, such a person has scruples that he is doing nothing, let him note that he is doing no small thing by pacifying the soul and bringing it into calm and peace, . . . for it is this that Our Lord asks of us, through David, saying: *Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus* (Ps. 45:11). As though he had said: Learn to be empty of all things . . . and you will see that I am God.

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* VI, chap. 8:

When you find yourself possessed of this simple and pure filial trust in our Lord, remain in it, without attempting to perform any kind of conscious acts of intellect or will. This simple and trusting love, this loving sleep of the spirit in the arms of the Savior, contains in itself as much excellence as you could ever hope to find. It is better to sleep on His sacred Breast than to be awake in any other place.

There, indeed, does the soul find rest from its labors and relief in its afflictions; and if it finds itself incapacitated for labor, it is only that its action may not impede or disturb that of the Holy Ghost who, in a hidden manner, is effecting a marvelous transformation in the soul. This mystical sleep is much more salutary and remedial when it comes upon souls that are already far advanced and are enmeshed in the many painful trials, darkness, and aridity which usually follow the prayer of quiet and the prayer of union.

Surin, *Catech. spir.,* I, 3:

There are three signs by which we can know that this repose, in which there are no distinct thoughts, is not slothfulness. The first is that during it the soul enjoys much peace and no boredom; the second, that the soul leaves that state with a strong resolution of working well; the third, that during the day the soul enjoys many lights whereby it is able to see how

it should conduct itself and many powers for practicing virtue. . . . When this repose is accompanied by much aridity and no knowledge, except a general idea of God, it does not on that account cease to be true contemplation and to be very profitable to the soul. . . . Directors who try to oblige souls to leave this repose are like those who would oblige one to disembark from a ship that is sailing full force before the wind and to walk on foot.

Father Grou *(Manuel,* pp. 96 f.) observes that, as in the natural order we do many things voluntarily, such as walking, stopping, looking at something, without adverting to what we are doing, so does the same thing happen, and even more so, in the supernatural order. Fie continues:

A person prays without realizing that he is praying; one's heart is united to God without adverting to this union. Therefore one must not say that he does nothing or that he is wasting time in the prayer of quiet, for actually he works in a very real manner, although secretly, and in this work self-love receives no nourishment nor anything to increase it. The merit of such prayer is this: self-love dies, and the soul begins to lose itself in God. As long as the soul believes that it knows its own condition, it is not lost; it even finds help. It begins to lose itself when the sensible lights vanish and, not being able to see anything, it no longer gazes or reflects on itself, but abandons itself to God. Gradually He pushes it forward along this way until, not finding any protection or security in itself or other men, the soul places all its trust in God and says with Jesus Christ, who was abandoned on the cross: "Father, into Thy hands I commend Aly spirit." . . . It is to this sublime act, so glorious to God and so useful to man, that the prayer of quiet leads. Of himself, no one could enter into it or advance in it; but when God introduces the soul to it, the soul must have the courage to persevere until the end.

7. Perseverance and the Fruit of Labors

The Living Flame, II, 5:

And here it behooves us to note the reason why there are so few that attain to this lofty state of the perfection of union with God. It must be known that it is not because God is pleased that there should be few raised to this high spiritual state, for it would rather please Him that all souls should be perfect, but it is rather that He finds few vessels which can bear so high and lofty a work. For, when He proves them in small

things and finds them weak and sees that they at once flee from labour, and desire not to submit to the least discomfort or mortification, He finds that they are not strong and faithful in the little things wherein He has granted them the favour of beginning to purge and fashion them, and sees that they will be much less so in great things; so He goes no farther with their purification, neither lifts them up from the dust of the earth, since greater constancy and fortitude would be necessary for this than they exhibit. . . . Oh, souls that seek to walk in security and comfort in spiritual things! If ye did but know how necessary it is to suffer and endure in order to reach this security and consolation, and how without this ye cannot attain to that which the soul desires, but will rather go backward, ye would in no way seek consolation, cither from God or from the creatures, but would rather bear the cross, and, having embraced it, would desire to drink pure vinegar and gal], and would count this a great happiness, for, being thus dead to the world and to your own selves, ye would live to God in the delights of the spirit; and, bearing a few outward things with patience and faithfulness, ye would become worthy for God to set His eyes upon you, to purge and cleanse you more inwardly by means of more interior spiritual trials, and to give you more interior blessings. For they to whom God is to grant so notable a favour as to tempt them more interiorly, and thus to advance them in gifts and deservings, must have rendered Him many services, and have had much patience and constancy for His sake, and have been very acceptable in His sight in their lives and works. . . . In the same way does God to those whom He desires to exalt with the most important exaltation; He makes and causes them to be tempted in order that He may raise them as far as is possible—that is, that He may bring them to union with the Divine wisdom, which, as David says, is silver tried in the fire and proved in the earth (Ps. 11:7) . . . and purified seven times, which is the greatest degree possible. . . . The soul is now aware that all has turned out very well for it . . . and, as the soul aforetime shared in tribulation, it now shares in consolation and in the kingdom; and as all its trials, within and without, have been amply rewarded by Divine blessings of soul and body, there is none of its trials that has not a correspondingly great reward. And thus the soul confesses that it is now well satisfied, when it says: "And pays every debt."

Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom*, chaps. 18-19:

In their many crosses and trials, My friends live happily in the hope of glory. They enjoy peace of heart and tranquillity of spirit and in the midst of their afflictions they are happier than the worldly ones with all

their pleasures and false peace. . . . Hear the reason why I tempt them in such a manner. . . . I dwell in the soul as in a garden of delights and I do not permit it to take pleasure in anything apart from Me and thus become attached to creatures. And because I wish to possess that soul chaste and pure, I encircle it with thorns and entrench it with adversities so that it cannot escape from My hands. I strew its path with agony and sorrow so that it cannot find rest in base and created things, but it must place all its welfare in the depth of My Divinity. . . . The reward which I give to these souls for their least suffering is so great that all the hearts in the world taken together would not exhaust it.

8. How Love Makes Crosses Light and These Crosses Are the Pledge of Love

Blessed Henry Suso, *ibid.*, chap. 19:

"I know, O Lord, that Thy crosses are the instruments of Thy wisdom and the pledges of our eternity, but they should not be too heavy for our strength. . . . I believe that there is no one in the world so sorely tried as myself. How am I to endure them?" To which the Lord replied: "A sick man, in the midst of his suffering, always thinks that there is no other suffering comparable to his and every poor man thinks there is no misery equal to his. If I were to send thee other crosses, your complaint would be the same. Be courageous, then; be firm and generous. Resign thyself completely to My will. Accept with resignation all the crosses which I deem it v ell to send thee and refuse none of them. Thou knowest very well that I desire thy good and I know what is best for thee. Experience has shown thee that all the crosses which I sent thee, whatever they have been, elevate thee and unit thee more closely and strongly with My Divinity than any other things which you might have chosen to do voluntarily. . . . If suffering did not molest thee, would it be true suffering? . . . Why should it be strange that thy cross is heavy, if you do not love it? Love it, and thou canst carry it easily. . . . If I were to inundate thee with spiritual consolations and embrace thee with love, thou wouldst not profit as much as through suffering the aridities and trials which I send thee. . . . Live, then, in peace, certain that thou wilt not perish under the Cross. It is easier for ten souls, who enjoy the delights of grace, to fall into sin, than for one soul that endures only affliction. The enemy has no power over those who lovingly weep under the Cross. Even if you were the most esteemed doctor in the world and the most learned theologian in My Church; even if you could speak of God with the tongue of an angel; you would still be less holy and less lovable

in My eyes than a soul that lives under the burden of my crosses. I give My graces to good and bad, but I reserve My crosses for My chosen ones. . . . Affliction weans a man away from the world and draws him to heaven. The more his worldly friends abandon him, the more does he grow in My grace which elevates him and makes him divine. From the Cross comes humility, purity of conscience, fervor of spirit, peace, tranquillity of soul, discretion, recollection, charity and all the blessings which flow from charity."

Way of Perfection, chap. 32:

These, then, are His gifts in this world. He gives them in proportion to the love which He bears us. He gives more to those whom He loves most, and less to those He loves least; and He gives in accordance with the courage which He sees that each of us has and the love we bear to His Majesty. When He sees a soul who loves Him greatly, He knows that soul can suffer much for Him, whereas one who loves Him little will suffer little. For my own part, I believe that love is the measure of our ability to bear crosses, whether great or small.

Blosius, *Institutiones,* chap. 8:

There is no sign of the divine election that is more certain than humble and patient suffering in tribulation for the love of God. This is the precious ring with which He espouses Himself to a soul. To suffer for God is a thing so great that a man should deem himself unworthy of such love. Even the slightest hardship endured for Him with a willing heart profits the soul immeasurably more than many great and good works.

St. Philip Neri says: "Nothing more glorious can befall a Christian than to suffer for Christ. The greatest tribulation one can endure is not to suffer tribulations. There is no stronger proof of God's love than adversity."

Says St. Rose of Lima:

O, if men only realized what a great thing is grace; how beautiful, how noble, how precious; if they but knew the riches that are hidden therein, the treasures, the joys, the delights, they would certainly expend every effort and privation in seeking affliction and pains. They would walk the length and breadth of the world in search of hardships, infirmities, and torments, instead of adventure, and all this to obtain the wonderful benefit of grace. This is the reward and gain of suffering. No one would ever put aside the cross or the labors which fall to his lot if he knew the scales wherein they are weighed to proportion them among men.

CHAPTER IV

Advance in Illumination and Union

THE first rays of divine light which enlighten and dazzle the understanding with a new and unknown splendor, inundate it within and without. They captivate and gladden it, vivify and illumine it, so that it is recollected without any effort on its part. Yet this divine light lasts but a short time. It comes suddenly and when least expected; but, in the midst of the incomparable joy which it causes, it immediately disappears, and the soul finds itself once more in sorrowful darkness. However, the divine light leaves the soul so animated, so changed, and so full of life and energy, that as often as these illuminations are repeated or prolonged, they effect a prodigious renovation.

The Prayer of Recollection

This phase is usually called the prayer of recollection. It is an infused type of prayer and is far superior to the prayer which is acquired by our own efforts and diligence. Human industry is powerless to attain it; God gives it when He wishes and as He wishes. Yet we should not on that account refrain from disposing ourselves to receive it and we should not harden our hearts when privileged to hear the divine invitation. For the soul makes more progress and is more illumined during a single moment of that type of prayer than during entire years spent in profound and prolonged considerations.

Such is the first degree or phase of the clear and distinct contemplation which usually follows the dark and confused silence and the first spiritual sleep, in which the light received is scarcely pci

ccpriblc except for the salutary effects it produces in the soul. The prayer of recollection produces even greater effects, and the soul knows full well that they come from God.

In meditation the soul uses a discursive method, but in contemplation there is no discursus, no comparison, no reasoning process. Everything is seen at once in a single peaceful gaze, with a clarity and effective movement which incomparably surpass anything that could be attained through a discursive method.[1] It is true that discursus leads to a certain kind of acquired contemplation [2] when, after much consideration of a subject and a penetration of it, a person is able to see it all at once, peacefully and serenely, and to appreciate it better than if he were to examine the subject laboriously and in great detail. But this type of contemplation, in addition to being of short duration, is greatly inferior to that which is manifestly infused. Without any effort and even without expecting it or working for it as such, the soul is suddenly filled with light and holy affections.[3] The faculties, that formerly were restless and dis-

1 "Meditation," says St. Bernard (or whoever is the author of the *Scala claustralium*), "is a studious activity of the mind under the control of reason which investigates the meaning of a hidden truth. Contemplation is an elevation of the mind whereby it is suspended in God and tastes the joys of eternal sweetness. Reading seeks; meditation finds; contemplation tastes; prayer petitions. The Lord said: 'Seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.' That is, seek by reading, knock by praying, and contemplation will be opened unto you. . . . Reading is common to both the good and the bad; contemplation is not, unless it is an imitation of contemplation."

Nevertheless contemplation is always granted to those who worthily seek for it and who persevere in asking for it through prayer. In expounding the words of Psalm 38, verse 4, "In my meditation a fire shall flame out," St. Bernard says that this is to be understood as the fire of desire which leads to contemplation.

"Of itself, thinking," says Richard of St. Victor (*Benj. major,* III, 1), "is effortless and fruitless; meditation works fruitfully; contemplation fructifies without work. Thinking explores, meditation discovers, contemplation admires. Thinking is fed by the imagination; meditation, by discursus; contemplation, by understanding."

2 In a later work Father Arintero states that the term "acquired contemplation" is an expression that serves only to provoke fruitless discussion and has no reason for existing. Although at one time he accepted the term, in the second edition of *La Evolution Mistica* he removed it, and in his work, *La Verdadera Mistica Tradicional,* he brands the term as totally useless. Cf. *La Verdadera Mistica Tradicional,* p. 252; *La Ciencia Tomista,* "Inanidad de la Contemplacion Adquirida," May-June, August-September, November-December, 1924; January-February, 1925. [Tr.]

8 "Meditation," says Juan de Jesûs-Maria (*Escuela de Oration,* VIII, 7), "is a discursus of the intellect in search of truth. Contemplation is a quiet gazing upon the truth discovered. Meditation is a road; contemplation is the end of the road. It

tracted, are now truly and easily recollected because they hear the sweet whistle of the loving Shepherd who calls them in order to strengthen and illumine them.[4]

"The soul which in the beginning was accustomed to consider and meditate on the mysteries," says Ven. Mary of the Incarnation,[5] "is so elevated by an attraction of grace that it is amazed to see that, without any labor on its part, the intellect is illumined and engulfed in the divine attributes and so strongly attached to them that nothing can separate it.[6] In the midst of these illuminations the soul is unable to work by its own power but receives and experiences the operations of God as long as it pleases His goodness to work in it." [7] Says Ruysbroek:

When a good man given to the interior life is interiorly recollected and withdrawn from all earthly things and when he keeps the superior part of his heart open to the eternal goodness of God, a secret heaven is manifested there, and from the divine clarity a light springs forth like a flash of lightning and radiates to this open heart. In that light the Spirit of the Lord speaks to the loving heart and says: "I am yours, O man, and you are Mine; I dwell in you and you live in Me." At the contact with this sudden stroke of light so great a joy and chaste delight take possession of the heart that the man does not know what has happened or how he can endure it. This experience is called a jubilation or delight which

should be noted that what has been said of meditation as the road to contemplation, is likewise true of all the types of ordinary prayer, for by these, also, one travels to and ultimately finds contemplation. This will be well understood by one who has practiced the above-mentioned types of prayer and is raised by the Lord to true contemplation, which is in no way brought about by one's own efforts, . . . but ... by a singular grace of the Lord who elevates the soul when He so desires. . . . This is the divine contemplation enjoyed by the saints, to which all aspire who live the contemplative life."

[4] *Interior Castle,* fourth mansions, chap, z: "In this state the faculties are not, I think, in union, but they become absorbed and are amazed as they consider what is happening to them."

[5] Cf. Chapot, *Vie,* IV, 4.

[6] Alvarez de Paz, *Vida espiritual,* V, 2, 7: "The suspension of the mind in contemplation follows this elevation. This suspension is nothing other than a most perfect attention to that which is contemplated and a forgetfulness of all inferior things."

[7] Cf. St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* Bk. VI, chap. 7. Father Tomâs de Jésus says that the knowledge acquired in meditation is obscure and of little efficacy. But the knowledge acquired in contemplation is "truth and life, and it captivates all our affections. The transformation of our conduct through meditation is effected slowly and step by step; but contemplation makes us run and even fly toward perfection" *(La meilleure patrie ou la vie contemplatif).*

cannot be explained by words and which no one can know, except by experience. . . . This is the first and lowest phase of the contemplative life in which God manifests Himself.8*

The infused light is not an occasion for vanity, however, for the soul realizes that this light is not proper to itself and that the soul can in no way attain it by its own power. By means of this light, indeed, the soul sees keenly its own nothingness and misery and it also discovers the infinite grandeur, wisdom, power, and goodness of God. This it is which captivates, amazes, and enamors the soul and makes it swoon away. At the same time that the soul is confounded and humiliated, it is animated and encouraged. Contradictions! the incredulous will say. Marvelous realities! the experienced soul will reply.8

Thus does the soul alternate between the vivid illuminations of the mind whereby God captivates it more and more and draws its intellect to Himself, and the desolations, darknesses, and vicissitudes through which the soul passes valiantly, animated by words of life which impel it to arrive at the very peak of sanctity.

Both light and the darkness contribute to the purification and refinement of the soul; the latter by strengthening it in virtue at the same time that it rids it of all earthly attachment; the former by uniting it to God, disclosing His marvels to it, and inflaming it with His most pure love. As the soul's detachment, purity, simplicity, and rectitude of intention increase, the illuminations by which God lovingly unites Himself to the intellect become more frequent and more prolonged. As absolute Master, He captivates it and draws it to Himself, both interiorly and exteriorly; interiorly by means of the light which He infuses, whereby He strengthens and moves the intellect to see the supreme Truth, something which creatures are unable to do; exteriorly by manifesting Himself to it as the only object able to satisfy the soul.10

8 *La Contempl. divina,* chap. to.

8 At this point the faithful soul, after much longing for the heavenly Spouse and much longing after His divine fragrance, exclaims: "The King has brought me into His storehouses. We shall dance with joy and we shall rejoice in Him who gives to us of His sweetness and consolation, which are better than wine. Lord, all the righteous love Thee!" See Cant. 1:3.

10 Ila Ilae, q. 173, a. 2: "For a man represents certain things to his disciple by signs of speech, but he cannot enlighten him inwardly as God does."

The Prayer of Quiet

Once the intellect is captivated in the prayer of recollection, the will also begins to be captivated and gradually all the other faculties. It does not matter that at times one or other of the faculties will wander or be distracted in spite of one's efforts. Like restless butterflies, they are startled by such great light, but they quickly return to the flower of perfect beauty and the only center where they can find complete rest.[11]

The will particularly is established on a firm foundation. It is at rest and enjoys perfect delight because now it reposes in the supreme Good, who is the only one that can satisfy it.[12] Every time the intellect is illumined, the will is inflamed with new fire which sweetly burns and consumes it. This fire inflames the will with greater power and longing to love in very truth the only true Love for now it sees no other object worthy of that love. Thus, loving God more and more, the soul reposes in Him and finds its rest in Him. It melts and is consumed in a swoon of love. It burns with new desires to

11 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 14: "This state is a recollecting of the faculties within the soul, so that its fruition of that contentment may be of greater delight. But the faculties are not lost, nor do they sleep. The will alone is occupied, in such a way that, without knowing how, it becomes captive. It allows itself to be imprisoned by God, as one who well knows itself to be the captive of Him Whom it loves. Oh, my Jesus and Lord, how much Thy love now means to us! It binds our own love so straitly that at that moment it leaves us no freedom to love anything but Thee. . . . This water of great blessings and favours which the Lord gives in this state makes the virtues grow much more, beyond all comparison, than in the previous one; for the soul is already rising from its miserable condition and gaining some slight foreknowledge of the joys of glory. . . . For His Majesty begins to communicate Himself to this soul and wishes it to be conscious of the method of His communication. As soon as it arrives at this state, it begins to lose its covetousness for the things of earth. And small merit to it, for it sees clearly that on earth it cannot have a moment of this joy; that there are no riches, or dominions, or honours, or delights which suffice to give it such satisfaction even for the twinkling of an eye; for this is true joy, and the soul realizes that it is this which gives genuine satisfaction. . . . This satisfaction resides in the most intimate part of the soul, and the soul cannot tell whence or how it has come to it; often it knows neither what to do, nor to wish, nor to ask. It seems to find everything at once, yet not to know what it has found: I do not myself know how to explain this."

12 "He who does not possess Me," said our Lord to St. Magdalen of Pazzi *(Œuvres,* IV, chap. 11), "whatever other goods he may possess, will not find rest. I alone can completely satisfy the heart of man. I am He who is, but he is that emptiness which is not. The greater the emptiness, the more do I fill it and the better does the creature realize its own nothingness."

"Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thee," says St. Augustine in his *Confessions* (I, chap, i), "and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee."

love Him even more and to make other souls love Him who loved us so much and is so deserving of our love. By loving the supreme Good and adhering to Him so intimately, the soul is made truly good, capable of performing every good work and of repelling every evil. The same divine fire which purifies the soul, fills it with an energy, a courage, a zeal, a rectitude that nothing can withstand and that will later enable the soul to realize the greatest enterprises.

If the fire of the will grows in proportion to the light of the intellect, then, as the will adheres more closely to the divine furnace, the intellect in turn will be filled with new illuminations which spring forth in a singular way from the fire of love.[13] But these illuminations, although very great, are scarcely noticed, because all consciousness and all the powers of the soul are absorbed in that prodigious love which can do all things, which governs and enslaves all things.[14]

Once it possesses its unique and perfect Good, the will advances and far surpasses the intellect. The reason for this is that the intellect attracts things to itself and seeks to assimilate them, but the will adheres to the object itself and is more and more engulfed in the ocean of infinite goodness. So it is that some mystics have affirmed that one can have love without knowledge, although others believe this to be impossible. Actually it sometimes happens that a person loves so ardently that he is not aware of how he does so, for all consciousness is absorbed in love. At times also, we love as if by a divine instinct because the Holy Ghost moves us to love and we hardly know why or in what manner He impels us and directs us, praying in us and for us with unspeakable groanings.[15] "And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what the Spirit desireth."[16]

Who can explain this? Who can describe the ineffable delights which the soul enjoys: the swoons, the sweet intoxication, the delightful sleep, the gentle divine touches, the vital transports, the

[13] *Dark Night of the Soul,* stanza 3: "Without light or guide, save that which burned in my heart."

[14] St. Augustine, *Manual,* chap. 18: "Love captivates and enslaves all the affections and changes them into itself. Love is sufficient in itself, is acceptable in itself, is sought for itself. It is both the merit and the reward. ... By love, we are united to God. ... In the beginning, good and honest things are done and used well through love, but later these same things are despised and ultimately, through love, one comes to see the secrets of God Himself."

[15] Rom. 8:26.

[16] *Ibid.,* 8:27.

ardent longings, the sweet wounds of love, the tender colloquies, and the wise madness of divine charity? The intellect itself, which witnesses all this, is so absorbed, enraptured, and obscured that it can neither describe it nor explain it. The will in this state is quiet and unmoved, in almost complete repose, yet at the same time it possesses a marvelous activity. Even while it rests, it loves with a love that is more inflamed. Loving, it swoons away, and swooning away, it cries out to all things to help it love its God. Then it can say truly with the spouse in the Canticle: [17] "I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him: and I will not let him go." [18]

The soul may remain for hours in this delicious quietude, and yet to it the hours seem short. Indeed, the soul would desire to remain in that state forever, saying with St. Peter: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." [19] It does not wish to be moved elsewhere, for fear of losing so great a treasure, but it wishes to enjoy eternally those divine delights.

However, the sensitive potencies still become restless at times and seek their particular objects, for they have not yet discovered the spiritual and hidden object which absorbs and captivates the will. Though they may molest the will, they can never disturb its repose. Later they will be sweetly recollected in such a way that the divine fire will reach them also.[20] The Beloved Himself repeatedly

17 Cant. 3:4.

18 "O eternal God," exclaims St. Francis de Sales *(Love of God,* VI, chap. 9), "when by Thy sweet presence Thou dost fill our hearts with Thy fragrant perfume ... all the faculties of the soul enter upon a sweet repose. . . . The will . . . is sweetly intoxicated in perceiving, without knowing how, the incomparable good of having its God present to it."

19 Matt. 17:4.

20 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 15: "This quiet and recollectedness in the soul makes itself felt largely through the satisfaction and peace which it brings to it, together with a very great joy and repose of the faculties and a most sweet delight. As the soul has never gone beyond this stage, it thinks that there is no more left for it to desire. ... It dares not move or stir, for it thinks that if it does so this blessing may slip from its grasp: sometimes it would like to be unable even to breathe. The poor creature does not realize that, having been unable to do anything of itself to acquire that blessing, it will be still less able to keep it longer than the time for which the Lord is pleased that it shall possess it. . . . Since the will is in union with God for as long as the recollection lasts, its quiet and repose are not lost, but the will gradually brings the understanding and memory back to a state of recollection again. ... It is very important that the soul which arrives thus far should recognize the great dignity of its state and the greatness of the favours which the Lord has granted it, and how there is good reason why it should not belong to the earth, since, unless its own faults impede it, His goodness seems to be making it a citizen of Heaven. Alas for such a soul if it turns back! ... I should call anything a real fall which made us

states, "I adjure you that you stir not up nor awake my beloved till she please." [21]

The soul desires whatever He desires because now it has no other will but His. Consequently, at the price of self-violence it will gladly leave the delicious quietude of contemplation for the solicitude of activity (which is to leave God for God) when charity or obedience demands.[22] Yet the soul will proceed to external work in such a way that its heart remains fixed on its source wherein is its only treasure.[23] It has patience for the exercises of the active life, but a strong desire for the exercises of the contemplative life.

Quietude may last for entire days, except for certain intervals, but the binding or sleep of the faculties is usually of short duration. Yet these brief moments are of such value that, as Sauvé says,[24] "they are able to transform the rest of one's life." When the hour comes to awake from this sweet sleep and heavenly delirium (which occurs whenever duty or charity calls one to other occupations), then the soul, which to all external appearances (and perhaps, even internal also) seemed to be idle and wasting time, comes forth so

hate the road that had led us to so great a blessing. In talking to these souls I do not say that they will not offend God and fall into sin; anyone who has begun to receive these favours would be right in guarding himself carefully against falling; for we are miserable sinners. What I strongly advise them to do is not to give up prayer, for prayer will enlighten them as to what they are doing, and the Lord will grant them repentance and strength to rise again. They must believe, and keep on believing, that if they cease from prayer they are running (or so I think) into danger."

21 Cant. 8:4.

22 St. Bernard, *Sermo in Cant.,* IX, 8: "Do not insist too much on the eye of contemplation, for the breasts of preaching are far better." See also, St. Teresa, *Book of the Foundations,* chaps. 5, 6.

Blessed Henry Suso states that, when there is an attachment to divine consolations, those consolations are of no profit so long as God calls us to something else. He who does not know how to leave God for God will be abandoned by God.

"I once refused," continues Henry Suso *(Union,* chap. 3), "to hear the confession of an afflicted soul that had been directed to me. 'Tell him to go to another,' I said to the porter, 'for I cannot hear him now.' But I had scarcely said those words when the sweetness of the divine grace which I had been enjoying vanished altogether and my heart became as hard as a stone. Amazed, I asked God the cause, and He interiorly responded: 'Just as you abandon this afflicted soul and send him away without any consolation, so I also have abandoned thee in that same instant and have taken from thee the sweetness of My grace and the joy of My consolation.' I immediately began to weep and beat my breast and I ran to the porter's office to call the person who was leaving. After hearing his confession and bringing him consolation, I returned to my cell to meditate. Then God, who is goodness itself, deigned to give back to me the joy which I had lost by my lack of condescension and abnegation."

23 Matt. 6:21; Luke 12:34.

24 *Etats mystiques,* p. 73.

invigorated and filled with divine ardor that it is entirely aflame and there is no difficulty or work that frightens it. Indeed the soul feels as if it could ignite the world with that fire which it carries within itself.

Then is the soul amazed and sorrowful at seeing that some are occupied with things other than loving their highest Good and seek a deceptive happiness apart from Him. The soul itself, on the other hand, though realizing its unworthiness, is concerned only with pleasing Him. Seeing how others act, it is inflamed with ardent desires for the divine glory and zeal for the salvation of souls, especially for those to whom it is most closely related.

Such is the second grade of union, which is called the prayer of quiet. During this type of prayer, God unites the human will to Himself. He captivates it not only from without, as at times created objects captivate it, but also from within, as the Lord and Creator who vivifies it, moves it, strengthens it, and inflames it with holy desires. Hence the will is not only attracted by the object proposed to it (this object, since it is infinite in goodness and beauty, enraptures and captivates the will), but it is also moved from within, inflamed with the charity infused by the Holy Ghost, who dwells therein as a vivifying principle. Thus the soul is totally consumed by love and reposes in its supreme Good with indescribable pleasure.[25]

This kind of prayer lasts for a longer time and is repeated at more

25 "When the soul is united to God as the center of its rest and happiness," said Mother Mary of the Incarnation *(loc. cit.),* "it draws all its faculties with it to make them rest in that union with the Beloved. From this point it quickly passes into a silence in which it does not speak even to Him who has captivated it, because He gives it neither the permission nor the power to do so. With much sweetness and delight, the soul sleeps on His breast. But its aspirations are not thereby quieted. Rather, although all else is at rest, these aspirations are strengthened and they inflame in the heart a fire which is so strong that it threatens to consume the soul. Immediately the soul enters upon a period of inactivity and is, as it were, consumed in Him who possesses it. The conjunction of these two states of the prayer of quiet is not so permanent in beginners that the soul does not sometimes change to a consideration of the mysteries of the Son of God or the divine attributes. But as often as the soul returns to the prayer of quiet, its operations are much more elevated than they were before. The communications which the soul has experienced in the prayer of quiet have placed it in a marvelous fellowship with God. This has been effected without labor, efforts, or study, but under the impulse of the divine Spirit. If the soul is faithful in the practice of the virtues that God exacts of it, it will make rapid progress and will enter into a most intimate relationship with the divine Spouse."

frequent intervals than is the prayer of simple recollection. Yet, even in its highest state, it is still relatively brief, although in a less intense degree it continues even in the midst of one's occupations so that the soul is always united with God and, as it were, engulfed in l lim. This may last for days at a time so that the soul lives as a stranger to those things which go on about it. However, union with God is not yet continuous, for there is still a great deal of alternation between light and obscurity, tempest and calm. When the prayer of quiet ceases and the soul sees what it has lost, it anxiously seeks it anew on all sides and in all possible ways and especially through a more faithful fulfillment of its obligations and a careful examination of the secret places of its conscience to see whether there may be anything there which is displeasing to its Beloved and may be the cause of His abandonment.[28]

The soul in this state begs unceasingly for Him who is its only good. It inquires of all its faculties if they have any news of Him.[27] It goes forth into the streets and public places; that is, it exercises itself in devout practices, works of piety and charity, or meditation

26 St. Bernard, *Senn.* 74 *in Cant.:* "When the Bridegroom departs, that is, when the grace of sweet contemplation ceases, the bride calls back the absent One and unceasingly begs His return with expressions of most ardent longings. . . . 'Return, return, my Beloved!' (Cant. 2.) This persistent plea does not cease, because the feeling of desire always remains. . . . The Bridegroom departs that He may be more urgently called back and, returning, be more strongly embraced. Sometimes, therefore, He pretends to depart a long way off so that He may hear the words: 'Stay yet with us, Lord.' "

2T "When you find yourself in the state of abandonment, My daughter," said our Lord to Sister Mariana of St. Dominic *(Vida,* p. 305), "examine your will and see whether you love or take pleasure in anything apart from Me. If you discover that is not the case, then know for certain that I am yet within your will. ... I am a loving Father and, when I see you afflicted, I manifest Myself, as does a father who hides himself from his beloved son to see whether the son will seek for him. This is a test of the son's love. When he sees that the son seeks for him with anxiety, the father reveals himself and consoles the son. This same thing I do to you. You are My beloved daughter whom I love tenderly. . . . Correspond with My caresses by withrawing yourself from all created things."

Espinas del ahna, dial. IV: "The pain which you experience on being separated from Me is the best way of returning to Me, if you mortify yourself by subjecting your will to Mine in suffering that loss. . . . Sometimes I absent Myself from your soul without any fault on your part, in order to test your humility, patience, and resignation. ... At other times I abandon you because of carelessness and faults due to your weakness, for I know that you are fragile and made of clay. ... In such instances you must be sorry for your fault, and suffer the penalty for it, which is My absence. In suffering the penalty you can merit as much as by abhorring the fault. Repair the fault by an act of sorrow and receive the penalty with an act of love. If you do this, you will advance in perfection and enjoy continual peace."

and holy desires, wherein it is accustomed to find Him. It asks its friends and those who guard the city; that is, its guardian angel, the saints to whom it is particularly devoted, and its director, if they will help it to find Him.

"I will rise, and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not. The watchmen who keep the city, found me: Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth? I adjure you, ... if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love." [28]

Then suddenly, when the soul least expects it, it finds Him again, and He is more loving than ever, lavishing a thousand caresses of exquisite tenderness.[29] It secs Him now, not near to it, as usually happens in this type of prayer, but within the soul itself, dwelling in the heart as on a flowery throne. He had entered the heart without knocking or without being perceived and He reigns there as absolute Lord.

Then the soul exclaims: "Who could have told me, O my Beloved, that I would find Thee alone and would discover Thee in my heart, and would embrace Thee with all my soul? Oh, who would find rest in Thy bosom? When shall I have the good fortune to see Thee in my heart, watering it with Thy sweetness, to make me forgetful of all my evils and to think of Thee alone and embrace Thee as my only Good?" [30]

Nevertheless, although the soul sees Him as present, it does not as yet experience so intimate a union with Him that Ide becomes one with it. At other times He manifests Himself to the soul for only an instant, in a ray of the light of recollection, in order to infuse into the soul new longings and desires to please Him. He makes His sweet presence felt without letting Himself be seen. He hides Himself, watching the soul as through a lattice-work, to see whether it will seek Him and with what fidelity it serves Him.[31]

28 Cant. 3:2 f.; 5:8.

29 Wisd. 12:1: "O how good and sweet is Thy spirit, O Lord, in all things."

80 St. Augustine, *Confessions,* I, 5: "Who will grant me that Thou wilt come into my heart and inebriate it so that it will forget all evil and embrace Thee as the one true Good?"

81 Cant. 2:9: "Behold, he standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices."

Espinas del alma, dial. IV: "I call Myself in Job: *the hidden word:* a word, because I declare Myself; hidden, because I do not yet manifest Myself. ... I look at my

SomrimuI le lets the soul actually feel the divine contact, and ii f.mu·, nwny with love and joy.[32] But in the next instant the soul i·, if .iin alone. Then it uses every possible means to find Him and breaks forth in the sublime canticle of St. John of the Cross: [33]

"Whither hast thou hidden thyself, And hast left me, O Beloved, to my sighing?
Thou didst flee like the hart, having wounded me: I went out after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.

O woods and thickets planted by the hand of the Beloved!
O meadow of verdure, enamelled with flowers, Say if he has passed by you."

The soul at this point has recourse to spiritual reading, meditation, prayer of affection and supplication, or contemplation of the divine marvels. It asks all creatures for its Beloved, and from all of them it seems to hear this sad reply: "Where is thy God?" Each time the soul hears His sweet name or sees Him manifested in His works, it experiences an irresistible attraction to Him and it runs in pursuit of His fragrance. It knows well that He feeds among the lilies[34] and that He is as a phial of myrrh.[35] It desires to discover Him within its own heart where He will enrich its candor and purity by means of great privations and mortifications.[33]

beloved through chinks and grilles. I manifest Myself only partially so that she will remain with Me, and yet her thirst and hunger for Me will increase."

82 Cant. 5:4.

83 *The Spiritual Canticle,* stanzas i and 4.

84 St. John of the Cross, in explaining the words "And my Beloved will pasture among the flowers," says: "And it is fitting to note here that the soul says not that the Beloved will pasture 'upon' the flowers, but 'among' the flowers, for, since His communication ... is in the soul itself, bv means of the virtues aforementioned, it follows that it is upon the soul itself that He pastures, transforming it into Himself, when it is prepared and seasoned and made fragrant with the aforementioned flowers of virtues and gifts and perfections" *(Spiritual Canticle,* XVII).

35 Weiss, *Apologie,* IX, 8: "There is scarcely any virtue more disinterested than purity. The world despises it, and God apparently reserves for it nothing but trials. To all external appearances, purity attracts to itself nothing but struggles, and interiorly it produces every kind of aridity. Those who think that the virgins follow the Spouse only because of the honey that is distilled from His lips, do not understand the ways of interior life. All other souls taken together do not experience such bitterness as do these virgins. God zealously watches for their slightest infidelities and carefully erases even their smallest stains so that they may see to what heights of perfection He wishes to elevate them. Nevertheless they persist in following the

Sometimes the communications are such that the soul cannot withstand the joy. Deeming itself unworthy, it is forced to say with St. Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. Grant these mercies to others in whom Thy graces will be more fruitful. Else enrich and purify my heart so that it can receive these blessings and profit by them. Meanwhile depart from me and let me suffer alone for Thy love. 'Flee away, O my Beloved.' " [36]

At such times God communicates Himself to the soul more fully and enriches it, only to abandon it again when least expected. Then again the faithful spouse languishes and faints away out of pure love. She strives to sustain herself with the flowers of the virtues and the fruits of good works, to please the Bridegroom and to find rest in His loving arms.[37]

Thus does our Lord toy with loving souls in order to inflame them the more with His holy love and to purify them from all their imperfections.[38] The world will consider this madness, but experienced souls know well the profit which is derived from this manner of action.[38] Sometimes, when they are sick, they are com-

steps of Him who almost always hides Himself from them. They know that He especially loves this virtue, and that is sufficient for them."

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* VII, 3: "Many souls approach our Lord; some, to hear Him, as did Magdalen; others, to be cured, as she who was suffering from a flow of blood; others, to adore Him, as the Magi; still others, to serve Him, as did Martha; others, to overcome their incredulity, as did Thomas; others, to annoint Him, as did Magdalen, Joseph, and Nicodemus. But the Shulamite seeks Him in order to find Him; and finding Him, desires nothing else but to hold Him fast; and holding Him, never to lose Him. 'I held Him, and I will not let Him go' (Cant. 3:4). Jacob, says St. Bernard, when he held God fast, gladly let Him go when he received His blessing (Gen. 32:26). But the Shulamite, no matter how many blessings she receives, will not let Him go. She does not desire the blessings of God, but she wants to possess the God of blessings, saying with David: 'For what have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart.' "

[36] Cant. 8:14.

[37] Cant. 2:5 f.

[38] Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 56: "There is a game which God sometimes plays in and with the soul and the game is this: He departs whenever the soul wishes to retain Him. But the joy and confidence which remain in the soul when He withdraws, say to it: He will surely return."

[38] St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* IV, 2: "Divine Wisdom cannot be understood except by those who have become insensate in the eyes of the world. . . . It cannot be felt except by those who have rejected earthly wisdom, that prudence of the flesh which is an enemy of God. . . . O Wisdom, what great effects Thou dost work in us; effects which at first glance seem a contradiction! One would think that Thou dost play with the souls that are so much loved by Thee. . . . Thou dost raise up the soul, and then Thou dost cast it into an abyss. Thou buildest with one hand and destroyest with the other. . . . O Wisdom, how Thou dost bury Thy treasure! And only they can possess it who do not deem Thee foolish."

plctcly cured by these consoling visits of the heavenly Physician. At other times, enamored of divine Wisdom, they receive His light and all the fruits which His good and sweet Spirit brings.[40] Even during I lis repeated absences, they manifest their fidelity, consolidate their strength, and burn with new love and more ardent desires.·*[1]

When in these visits the divine Consoler infuses Himself with greater intensity, the soul cannot help but recognize Him immediately. Yet sometimes the communications of these first two grades of supernatural prayer are accustomed to be very desultory and they give rise to serious doubts, especially in inexperienced souls or those who are not properly disposed. Some souls, though they live a life of mortification, are as yet filled with self-love and worldly affections. Whenever they experience the slightest interior delight or consolation in prayer, they immediately think they have been raised to the prayer of quiet. Therefore we must distinguish between ordinarv affections and effects, which are to a great extent natural, and extraordinary ones, which are called supernatural or mystical. Knowing these distinctions, a person will be less prone to resist, through self-initiative or voluntary occupations and prayers, those impulses which are truly divine. Rather he will cooperate with them and permit himself to be led by them. He will immediately reject all feelings that bear the marks of illusion and that would serve only to waste time, break one's health through vain stupidity, or fill one with foolish presumption.

When devout souls receive a visit from the Lord they strive earnestly to heed Him and follow His suggestions. They take pleasure in His mercy without any undue attachment to it. If He withdraws from them, they make an intensive search for Him, using every possible means to find Him, and they try to serve Him in His absence with even greater fidelity and disinterest.[42] The truth of

40 Wisd. 12:1.

41 "He departs," says the author of *Scala Claustralittm,* "so that He may be more vehemently desired; desired, that He may be more avidly sought; sought, that He may be more happily found. He departs from us so that we may not consider this exile our fatherland. But take heed, O spouse. Thy Bridegroom is very sensitive and jealous. If He perceives that thou art inclined to some other lover; that is, to some consolation of this present life, He departs from thee and seeks another spouse."

42 St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Hom. apost.,* app. I, no. 7: "When God does not speak, the soul must resort to all possible means of uniting itself with Him. It must make use of meditation, . . . supplications and resolutions, as long as these acts are per-

divine communications is demonstrated by a disinterested love and by an embracing of the cross, rather than by the keenness with which souls experience these salutary and delightful influxes.

St. Lawrence Justinian gives the following signs by which true contemplation and the divine quiet may be distinguished: "To be prudent in conduct; to watch over one's spirit with careful vigilance; to know how to recollect one's thoughts; to possess a right intention in all one's actions; to apply oneself to spiritual studies; to desire the presence of God; to love Him with a complete and humble love; to take the greatest pleasure in His fellowship; to walk inflamed with the love of heavenly things; and to enjoy profound peace." 43

"Nature," observes Tauler, "is unstable in its good works; but

formed without any violence. But above all the soul must content itself with those measures to which it feels itself inclined."

On the other hand, when God does speak, the soul must listen with greatest attention and in profound silence. "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for He will speak peace unto His people" (Ps. 84:9).

Way of Perfection, chap. 31: "But there are persons ... to whom the Lord gives tenderness of devotion and holy inspirations and light on everything. He bestows this Kingdom on them and brings them to this Prayer of Quiet, and yet they deafen their ears to His voice. For they are so fond of talking and of repeating a large number of vocal prayers in a great hurry, as though they were anxious of finishing their task of repeating them daily, that when the Lord . . . puts His Kingdom into their very hands . . . they do not accept it, but think that they will do better to go on reciting their prayers, which only distract them from their purpose.

"Do not be like that, sisters, but be watchful when the Lord grants you this favour. Think what a great treasure you may be losing."

St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue,* chap. *66:* "Sometimes the soul will be so ignorant that, having resolved to say so many prayers vocally, when I visit her she, in order to complete her tale, will forego my visitation rather than abandon that which she had begun. In so doing she yields to a deception of the devil. The moment she feels her mind disposed by my visitation, she should abandon vocal prayer. Then, my visitation past, if there be time, she can resume the vocal prayers which she had resolved to say, but if she has not time to complete them, she ought not on that account to be troubled or suffer annoyance and confusion of mind."

48 Vita solit., chap. 1.

Mary Agreda, *Mystical City of God,* I, Bk. I, chap. 20: "This is the excellence of the benefits which descend from the Father of lights, that they give assurance and confidence while making the soul humble, and that they encourage while exciting solicitude and watchfulness, though still preserving tranquillity and peace in this solicitude; for all these effects are not incompatible in fulfilling the will of God. . . . Try to rid thyself of the inordinate disturbance of excessive fear, and leave thy cause with the Lord and make His cause thy own. Let fear be with thee until thou art purified and cleansed of thy sins and of thy ignorance, but also love the Lord in order that thou mayest be transformed in Him, and set Him as the Master and the Arbiter of thy actions without desiring to be above any person."

grace remains constant both in adversity and in prosperity. Nature delights in itself, in the novelties of the age, in pastimes, and in perishable creatures. Grace takes pleasure neither in itself nor in any creature, but only in God and in holiness of life. Grace makes a man humble, long-suffering and just. . . . Nature wishes to probe curiously into everything and to be always enjoying interior delights and consolations. . . . Nature says in all things: *I, to me, for me, mine.* It is always seeking itself, and remains unmortified. But God and His grace always exclude this *I, to me, for me,* and *mine.*" Whence, it follows that in all things a man should be firm, humbly resigned, and mortified. . . . The entire spiritual life consists in being able to distinguish the works of nature from those of grace." [45]

Only thus shall we be able to renew ourselves in the spirit of our mind, despoiling ourselves of the old man, with all his acts, to clothe ourselves anew, created anew in holiness and justice.[40]

"However slightly God takes possession of a soul," says St. Catherine of Genoa, "He holds it so absorbed in the contemplation of His Majesty that everything else is as nothing in its eyes. The soul in such a state loses all its proper characteristics. It no longer sees or speaks of itself. It reckons neither the losses which it has endured nor the pains which it is now suffering as something proper to itself." [47]

APPENDIX

1. The Prayer of Recollection

Interior Castle, fourth mansions, chap. 3 (see also *Way of Perfection,* chap. 28):

[44] A subtle egoism is often hidden in the emphatic use of the words "our" and "we." Often a person who would not dare openly to praise himself or prefer himself before others, will praise and esteem his things for the simple reason that they are his. Thus, one will esteem his country, his family, or his religious community patently because of the great debt he owes them or because they are deserving of praise, but actually he esteems them because he himself is included in the group. In the modest expression "we" there is conveniently hidden and disguised the crafty ego. Saintly religious, however much they love their religious institute, as is proper, never place their own Order above others for they realize that since these, too, bear the approbation of the Church, they are gardens of delight to the Savior.

[45] *Institutions,* chap. 4.

[46] Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9f.

[47] *Purgatory,* chap. 17.

ADVANCE IN ILLUMINATION AND UNION

First of all, I will say something . . . about another kind of prayer. . . . It is a form of recollection which also seems to me supernatural, for it does not involve remaining in the dark, or closing the eyes, nor is it dependent on anything exterior. A person involuntarily closes his eyes and desires solitude; and, without the display of any human skill there seems gradually to be built for him a temple in which he can make the prayer already described; the senses and all external things seem gradually to lose their hold on him, while the soul, on the other hand, regains its lost control.

It is sometimes said that the soul enters within itself and sometimes that it rises above itself. . . . Let us suppose that these senses and faculties (the inhabitants, as I have said, of this castle, which is the figure that I have taken to explain my meaning) have gone out of the castle, and, for days and years, have been consorting with strangers, to whom all the good things in the castle are abhorrent. Then, realizing how much they have lost, they come back to it, though they do not actually re-enter it, because the habits they have formed are hard to conquer. But they are no longer traitors and they now walk about in the vicinity of the castle. The great King, Who dwells in the Mansion within this castle, perceives their good will, and in His great mercy desires to bring them back to Him. So, like a good Shepherd, with a call so gentle that even they can hardly recognize it, Lie teaches them to know His voice and not to go away and get lost, but to return to their Mansion; and so powerful is this Shepherd's call that they give up the things outside the castle which had led them astray, and once again enter it.

These people are sometimes in the castle before they have begun to think about God at all. I cannot say where they entered it or how thy heard their Shepherd's call: it was certainly not with their ears, for outwardly such a call is not audible. They become markedly conscious that they are gradually retiring within themselves.

One preparation for listening to Him . . . is that we should contrive not to use our reasoning powers, but to be intent on discovering what the Lord is working in the soul; for, if His Majesty has not begun to grant us absorption, I cannot understand how we can cease thinking in any way which will not bring us more harm than profit.

When His Majesty wishes the working of the understanding to cease. He employs it in another manner, and illumines the soul's knowledge to so much higher a degree than any we can ourselves attain that He leads it into a state of absorption, which, without knowing how, it is much better instructed than it could ever be as a result of its own efforts, wh would only spoil everything. See also *Way of Perfection,* chap. 28.

Alvarez de Paz, *Grados de Contemplaciôn,* V:

It is one thing for the soul to enter into itself through its own efforts and with the help of grace, which ingress we are able to realize in the state of meditation. It is far different to be called suddenly by God, to be recollected, and to find Him in the inner core of one's heart and to be held fast there. Unless He should do this, we of ourselves could never realize it. . . . God is accustomed to call suddenly the contemplative soul which is freed from all external activity or the soul which is praying vocally or is engaged in some useful occupation. He recollects the intellect and affections and the thoughts without the soul's doing anything to contribute to this activity and He places the soul at the table of light and love where it receives its fill. Then the soul forsakes external things, not with difficulty, but smoothly, and as if drawn by something else (as truly it is drawn). As if by nature . . . the mind turns to interior things. . . . This ingress of the soul into the center of the heart is a work of God. . . . "Therefore, behold I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart" (Osee. 2:14). He allures the soul by interior instincts and words and He beckons it with a sweet call. He leads it into the wilderness of solitude when all its faculties are recollected. He speaks to its heart when suavely and lovingly He instructs it in the science of purity.

2. True Mystical Quietude

Way of Perfection, chap. 31:

It is in this kind of prayer . . . that the Lord . . . begins to give us His Kingdom on earth so that we may truly praise Him and hallow His name, and strive to make others do so likewise. This is a supernatural state, and, however hard we try, we cannot reach it for ourselves; for it is a state in which the soul enters into peace, or rather in which the Lord gives it peace through His presence. . . . In this state all the faculties are stilled. The soul, in a way which has nothing to do with the outward senses, realizes that it is now very close to its God, and that, if it were but a little closer, it would become one with Him through union. . . . It cannot understand how it knows Him, yet it sees that it is in the Kingdom . . . and it feels such reverence that it dares to ask nothing. It is, as it were, in a swoon, both inwardly and outwardly, so that the outward man . . . does not wish to move, but rests, like one who has almost reached the end of his journey, so that it may the better start again upon its way, with redoubled strength for its task.

The body experiences the greatest delight and the soul is conscious of a deep satisfaction. So glad is it merely to find itself near the fountain that, even before it has begun to drink, it has had its fill. There seems nothing left for it to desire. The faculties are stilled and have no wish to move, for any movement they may make appears to hinder the soul from loving God. They are not completely lost, however, since, two of them being free, they can realize in Whose Presence they are. It is the will that is in captivity now; and, if while in this state it is capable of experiencing any pain, the pain comes when it realizes that it will have to resume its liberty. The mind tries to occupy itself with only one thing, and the memory has no desire to busy itself with more: they both see that this is the one thing needful and that anything else will unsettle them. . . . Speaking is a distress to them: they will spend a whole hour on a single repetition of the Paternoster. They are so close to God that they know they can make themselves understood by signs. They are in the palace, near to their King, and they see that He is already beginning to give them His Kingdom on earth. *Sometimes tears come to their eyes, but they weep very gently and quite without distress.* . . . They seem not to be in the world, and have no wish to see or hear anything but their God; nothing distresses them, nor does it seem that anything can possibly do so. In short, for as long as this state lasts, they are so overwhelmed and absorbed by the joy and delight which they experience that they can think of nothing else to wish for, and will gladly say with St. Peter: "Lord, let us make here three mansions."

When this quiet is felt in a high degree and lasts for a long time . . . they see clearly that their whole self is not in what they are doing, but that the most important faculty is absent—namely, the will, which I think is united with its God—and that the other faculties are left free to busy themselves with His service. For this they have much more capacity at such a time, though when attending to worldly affairs they are dull and sometimes stupid.

It is a great favour which the Lord grants to these souls, for it unites the active life with the contemplative. At such times they serve the Lord in both these ways at once; the will, while in contemplation, is working without knowing how it does so; the other two faculties are serving Him as Martha did. Thus Martha and Mary work together.

The will simply loves, and no effort needs to be made by the understanding, for it is the Lord's pleasure that, without exercising its thought, the soul should realize that it is in His company, and should merely drink the milk which His Majesty puts into its mouth and enjoy its sweetness. The Lord desires it to know that it is He Who is granting it that favour

and that in its enjoyment of it He too rejoices. But it is not His will that the soul should try to understand how it is enjoying it, or what it is enjoying; it should lose all thought of itself, and He Who is at its side will not fail to see what is best for it.

St. Lawrence Justinian, *De disc, monast.,* chap. 8:

In this second coming, what speech, what eloquence, or what human genius could capture such exuberance of love? There the intellect is excluded, thought is deadened, and only love is the witness of the mutual delights. Love speaks, love reasons, love joins both together in a most sweet intimacy under the bond of charity. The words of the secrets of love are spoken, which it is not given to any man to utter and they are the more sweet as the affections are more vehement and the love more pure. In this spiritual and singular union the whole soul is absorbed in delight; it is totally inebriated and it faints away, passing into a swoon of love. There is nothing in which it delights exteriorly, while interiorly it feeds on the greatest goods. It has but this one desire: that it may ever increase in love. Although it is entirely consumed in charity, yet all that it experiences it deems as little in its desire for delight. . . . It desires ever to be so (if such be lawful), because it has found Him whom it sought; and Him whom it loves, it tenderly embraces. Its heart is united to Him whom it has desired with its whole being.

3. The Certain Pledge of the Holy Ghost

The sincere desire to suffer hardships for God, perfect conformity to the crosses which He sends to us, ceaseless abnegation, annihilation, and forgetfulness of self, and total abandonment to the divine hands: all these indicate that we are animated with the sentiments of Jesus Christ and they enable us to receive His lights and to be inflamed with a strong love which is pure and disinterested. They are also an unequivocal sign that the divine Spirit is present in us.

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 29:

"I shall give you an unmistakeable sign which will remain in your soul forever and which you shall experience for all eternity. It is this: You will be illumined and inflamed, now and forever, and you will burn with love. . . . This is the certain pledge, the sign of My presence, an authentic sign which no one can contradict. . . . For love of Me you will bear all tribulations. If anyone offend you by word or deed, you will exclaim that you are not worthy of such a grace. This love which I give

you is the love that I manifested for you when I carried the cross for you in patience and humility. You will know that I am within you, if every contrary word and every action arouses in you, not only patience, but pleasure and delight." . . . I felt His unction; I felt it with so ineffable a sweetness that I longed to die, but to die in the midst of all possible tortures. I counted as nothing the sufferings of the martyrs, for I desired torments even greater than theirs. I would have wished that the whole world should heap on me all possible injuries and all the tortures in its power. . . . All possible torments together were little enough in the eyes of my desires. My soul realized its insignificance in the face of the goods promised for life eternal. I knew this for certain, and if all the wise men in the world had told me differently, I would not have believed them. I would guarantee eternal salvation to as many as go by this road. . . . The sign itself is the road to salvation: the love of God and suffering desired in His name.

The Prayer of Union

The soul purifies its faculties by using all of them in the search for the Beloved, not wishing to find rest in anything but Him and being attached to nothing, not even His gifts. It empties its faculties of all other objects so that they will tend to Him alone and be able to discover His footprints, smell His fragrance, and thus be led to Him. The soul now knows by experience that its good consists in adhering to God and placing all its trust in Him. Apart from Him it desires nothing and seeks nothing, for outside of God there is nothing in heaven or on earth that can completely satisfy the soul. Strengthened with hope and trusting in the divine promises, the soul yearns incessantly for Him, saying with all its heart: "Draw me; we will run after Thee to the odor of Thy ointments." [48]

The slower the soul is in finding Him, the more inflamed it is with the desire to see Him and with the more ardor and love, purity and rectitude does it seek Him. Ultimately all the faculties simultaneously find Him and they are captivated by His beauty, His goodness, and His love. The soul is then introduced into His royal chamber, the mystical wine cellar, which is the third grade of contemplation.

Here the soul perceives that all its faculties and the body also faint

[48] Cant. 1:3.

away and arc, as it were, dissolved in the God of its heart who is its only portion forever.[48] The will adheres to Him with more fervor than ever and all its companions (that is, the rest of the faculties) arc associated with it in this adherence. God takes possession of the faculties as supreme Master, captivating them from within and without, inundating them with His divine delights, and uniting them to Himself by the strong bonds of charity. Now the soul possesses its God completely; this it does precisely because it is possessed by Him. In all truth it can say: "My beloved to me, and I to Him who feedeth among the lilies" (Cant. 2:16).[80]

At this stage the union of the faculties with God is almost complete and perfect. It is a grade of prayer which is called simply the prayer of union because all the powers of the soul seem to be firmly united to God, dispossessed of everything else, and possessed by Him in such a way that they cannot be occupied in anything other than giving delight to the supreme Lord with whom they have been made one by love.[81]

[49] Ps. 72:26.

St. Bernard, *Sermo yi in Cant.,* 6-10: "The soul, whose good consists in adhering to God, should not glory in being perfectly united with Him, if it does not actually feel that He is dwelling in it and it in Him. It will not be one thing with Him, as the Father and the Son are one. Rather, this adhesion to God consists in being one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17). I who am but dust and ashes shall dare to say that I am one in spirit with God if I know from evident signs that I adhere to Him. . . . And who is it that perfectly adheres to God save him who, dwelling in God as beloved by God, draws God to himself by a reciprocal love. Since they are so closely united by the bonds of mutual love, there is no doubt that God dwells in man and man in God."

[61] St. Thomas, *Opusc. 61,* I, cap. 27: "In the preceding grades, the soul loves and is loved in turn; it seeks and is sought; it calls and is called. But here, in a wonderful and indescribable manner, it carries away and is carried away; it possesses and is possessed; it embraces and is ardently embraced; and is united to God alone by the bond of love."

Sandaeus, *Theologia mystica,* II, *6:* "The mystical union is an experimental and immediate knowledge of God, obtained through a secret embrace and mutual kiss between God, who is the Spouse, and the soul, which is the bride."

Nouet, *Conduite,* V, 14: "God, who formerly resided in the just soul through grace as a hidden treasure, is now present to it as a treasure discovered. He illumines it, touches it, embraces it, penetrates it; He infuses Himself in all its faculties; He abandons Himself to it and fills it with the plenitude of His being. The soul, in turn, carried off by His attractiveness and the sight of His beauty, possesses Him, embraces Him, and is intimately united with Him. Entirely aflame with love, the soul melts . . . and sweetly loses itself in its God with sentiments of inconceivable joy. From this follows the diversity of names which are given to the mystical union; such as unction, kiss, perfume, heavenly dew, divine penetration, transformation, joyful love, deifying love, and other similar terms which indicate the various impressions of unifying love."

The delights which the soul experiences at the divine touch, its swoonings, its ecstasies, its longings for a union still more intimate, its fiery impulses, its raptures, its flights of spirit and the terrible wounds of love which they produce, its loving colloquies, and the exquisite tenderness with which the Beloved corresponds and which, since this tenderness is so excessive, confounds the soul—all these are things to be experienced and desired rather than publicized. The divine love has holy secrets which no one can speak, even though he should wish to do so: "Secret words which it is not granted to man to utter." [52]

"What joy," exclaims St. Catherine of Genoa, "to find one's soul completely despoiled of all created things and to see a most consoling intimacy established between the soul and uncreated Love! Attracted by its Savior, the soul becomes regenerated and transformed in Him. Under the weight of holy love, it cries out with much greater ardor and vehemence than it did under the weight of its passions." [53]

United to God by the pure, ardent, and impetuous love which the Holy Ghost pours forth in it, the soul becomes truly one spirit with Him. It shines forth with the flames of the fiery divine charity that consumes and destroys all servile fear.[54]

"After God has inebriated the soul in the delights of the prayer of quiet, He buries it in the prayer of union," says Sister Mary of the Incarnation, "in the wine cellar, in order to introduce it to perfect charity. . . . There are diverse grades which make the soul one in spirit with God. There are touches, interior words, and caresses from which come ecstasies, raptures, intellectual visions, and

52 II Cor. 12:4.

53 *Dialogue,* I, chap. 14.

54 St. Augustine, *Manual,* chaps. 19, 20: "Love does not know the meaning of dignity nor does respect restrain it. He who loves is drawn to God with great trust and he speaks to Him familiarly without doubts or fears. The soul that loves God can neither think nor speak of anything else. All other things cause it weariness. . . . God loves in order to be loved. When He loves us, He desires nothing else than that we should love Him; for He knows that those who love Him are by that very fact blessed. . . . The vehemence of love, alienates the soul in such wise that it is no longer aware of itself but only of God . . . and it goes beyond itself to enjoy Him with ineffable delight. . . . Love gives familiarity with God, familiarity gives confidence, confidence gives a taste for God, and this taste gives hunger and appetite. A soul which is touched by the love of God, can neither think of nor desire anything else, but it frequently sighs: 'As the hart panteth after the fountain, so does my heart pant after Thee my God.' "

many other excellent graces which are more readily experienced than described because the senses have no part in these things and the soul docs no more than receive and experience what the Holy Ghost works in it."

11ère the soul sees itself but it does not recognize itself. It finds itself totally changed; so strengthened, so filled with light and ardor, so deified, breathing forth every type of virtue, purity, and holiness, that the soul perceives clearly that it is not now itself that works, but Jesus Christ works in it. For that reason it does not think of itself, but only of Him.[55]

The soul sees that its faculties possess a divine power and an infallible efficacy for all good. The flesh seldom ventures now to covet anything against the spirit. The passions are subject to the will, and the will itself has no other desire and wishes no other desire than that of the divine will, to which it is intimately united. It can now say with St. Paul: "For we are the good odor of Christ." [56] Yet the soul does not glory in itself for it realizes that the heavenly fragrance which permeates it and radiates from it comes entirely from the Spirit of love who possesses it and in no way from the soul itself.[57]

[55] Blessed Henry Suso, *Disciplina,* III: "He who loves God dies to himself and abandons himself to Him who has neither depth nor end. He is so profoundly absorbed in God that he neither feels nor sees nor is disturbed by the extraordinary happenings which are taking place within himself. He rests and sleeps tranquilly in the abyss of the divine will. Who better than God could merit our heart and our pure and sincere intention, free from all self-interest, delight, seduction, or reward? Working thus, we can say with Jesus Christ: 'I seek not my own glory' " (John 8:50).

[56] II Cor. 2:15.

St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* I, 23: "Then the soul, giving a death blow to self-love, enters into an ever increasing possession of pure divine love. . . . A heavenly fire inflames and consumes it and in order to alleviate its ardors, the soul occupies itself in its daily tasks with an amazing energy. But that inner fire is not mitigated. To complete its suffering, it is unable to speak to anyone of the mysterious effects of divine love. However, it is at least able to communicate to its body some of the vivifying ardors and to say to it: Henceforth I shall hot call thee a human creature, because now you are totally annihilated with me in the Lord. I now see nothing in thee to remind me of the separation between God and man which was caused by sin."

It is not possible, says Blosius *(Inst.* 12, 3), for the soul to arrive at mystical union if it has not first become totally pure and simple. The slightest affection for created things, an idle word, a morsel of food taken out of time, or any other light fault is sufficient to impede union with Him who is supreme purity, as long as that fault is not expiated.

[57] St. Athanasius, *Ad Serap.,* Ill, 3: "We are the good odor of Christ when we are anointed by His Spirit."

That the soul may not be unmindful of Him, God is accustomed to withdraw, or pretend to do so, and leave the soul in the state of abandonment. As a result, the soul, which in the midst of its abundance was able to say with the Psalmist: "I shall never be moved," [68] is now forced to add: "Thou turnedst away Thy face from me, and I became troubled." If the absence is prolonged, the affliction increases, and the soul exclaims: "Why hidest thou Thy face, and thinkest me Thy enemy? Why dost Thou depart from me and forget me in my need and tribulation?" [58]*

Thus does the soul break forth in loving complaints with a confidence and daring that seem to trespass the limits of prudence. Only the impetus of its sorrowful and afflicted love can excuse such boldness.[60] But the Lord is pleased, as St. Teresa points out, with these

St. Cyril, *In Joan.* XI, 2: "Just as the sweet odor of perfume reveals its nature, so the Spirit is the good odor of the divine essence and He transmits to the creature the divine nature and makes him share in God."

St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 20: "I believe myself that a soul which attains to this state neither speaks nor does anything of itself, but that this Sovereign King takes care of all that it has to do. Oh, my God, how clear is the meaning of that verse about asking for the wings of a dove. . . . It is evident that he is referring to the flight taken by the spirit when it soars high above all created things, and above itself first of all; but it is a gentle and a joyful flight and also a silent one. . . . From this it acquires true humility, which will never allow it to say anything good of itself nor will permit others to do so. It is the Lord of the garden, and not the soul, that distributes the fruit of the garden, and so nothing remains in its hands, but all the good that is in it is directed towards God; if it says anything about itself, it is for His glory. It knows that it possesses nothing here; and, even if it so wishes, it cannot ignore this; for it sees it by direct vision, and, willy-nilly, shuts its eyes to things of the world, and opens them to an understanding of the truth."

58 Ps. 29:7.

89 Job 13:24; Ps. 43:24.

60 Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom,* chap. 13: "Thou art, O my Jesus, a friend so sweet, so beautiful, so divine, so incomprehensible, that though all the angels should speak to me of Thee, they could not calm my soul nor make it cease to long for Thy presence. . . . Where is the fidelity of Thy love? The spouse, whose heart Thou hast captivated, awaits Thee and desires Thee. She sighs and laments and dies for Thy presence. From the bottom of her heart, she cries out: 'Return, return!' (Cant. 2:17). She says to her companions: 'Have you by chance seen Him? Will He come or does He not wish to come? Shall I ultimately possess Him in my heart, or shall I die of His absence?' O Lord! Thou hearest the prayers and sighs of a soul which loves Thee and Thou dost keep silent vigil."

St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* II, 10: "How is it possible, Lord, that I do not feel Thy presence in the midst of this terrible martyrdom? . . . But I shall not complain, since Thou hast so disposed. . . . As long as Thou dost decree these torments which far surpass what man is able to suffer here below, I remain interiorly resigned, and this itself is a grace which can come only from Thee. . . . Without giving me any sensible consolation, Thy love constantly comforts me. . . . I know that Thou hast destroyed in me whatever has been sown in corruption, the mon al man and all the ties which bind me to earth."

noble fits of passion and this foolishness of love. And although He appears to abandon the soul, He does not actually do so, for in a bidden manner I le sustains it with His grace and takes pleasure in seeing how valiantly it struggles. He does this with the intention of rewarding the soul with new and immeasurable favors and of making it feel even more keenly the unspeakable delights of His loving fellowship which never palls.[61] Then the soul exclaims: "I to my beloved, and his turning is toward me." [62]

Finding itself so intimately united with Him, so strong in virtue, so adorned with His grace, so inflamed with His charity, and, in a word, so divinized with the lights, virtues, and graces with which He has enriched it, the soul loses all sight of self and tries to see nothing but Him who works in and through it. Permeated as it is with the fire of divine love, it becomes more and more like the iron thrust into the furnace which takes on the appearance of fire and not of iron.[63] Then will the soul say with St. Paul: "For me, to live is Christ: and to die is gain." [64] Whether the soul lives or dies, what really matters to it and what preoccupies it, is that Jesus Christ should be glorified in it,[65] and that His divine Spirit should animate it and direct it in all things.[66]

[61] Wisd. 8:16: "Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness."

[62] Cant. 7:10.

[63] St. Bernard, *De dilig. Deo,* X: "As a drop of water poured into wine loses itself completely and takes on the color and taste of wine; as a burning log takes on the appearance of fire; . . and as the air illumined by the sun takes on the clarity of light; , . so all human affection in the saints must lose its identity and be transformed into the will of God. Otherwise, how will God be all in all, if in man there remains something of man? Man's substance, to be sure, will remain, but it will possess another form, a new glory, and a new power."

[64] Phil. 1:21.

St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogties,* III, i: "If with the sentiment of pure faith one could see the effects of a single ray of divine love in the souls it pleases Me to bless, he would not be able to live in the world, so inflamed would he find himself. . . . Hearts lovingly guided by the divine Spirit, who breathes where He will, abandon the world and its seductions . . . and choose hatred and contempt rather than honors and pleasures. . . . In the splendor of His light man perceives the things of God and is changed into an angel and from an angel he becomes a god by participation. Thus even in this world man is truly transformed by love. From a sensual man he becomes spiritual, both as to his soul and his body. If he speaks, he speaks only through the power of God. . . . The words which fall from his lips are like a heavenly conversation. . . . When he exercises his ministry, he does so with the knowledge and unction which God gives him."

[65] *Ibid.,* i:20.

[66] St. Margaret Mary, *Autobiography,* V: "The sovereign Spirit who works in me, independently of myself, has acquired so absolute a dominion over my spiritual

Then does the soul hear the divine voice of the Spouse who calls to it to follow Him;[67] and when He speaks, it melts away.[68] It feels certain transports of a love so pure and unselfish that they inflame the soul with ardent desires of being consumed as a holocaust and of suffering whatever pains may be necessary for the greater glory of God and the good of souls. It finds itself equipped with lights and powers to realize the most noble and heroic desires.

As a result, such a soul occupies itself with its external duties with a facility and ease that cause great wonderment. In a few hours it is sometimes able to accomplish perfectly what other capable persons could not do in entire days. It performs its external obligations without being the least bit distracted or dissipated and without ever losing sight of the Lord. Its heart is never separated, even for a moment, from Him whom it loves so affectionately.

United in this way to God, the soul possesses the light of His truth, and the fortitude of His divine power. As soon as the soul perceives the "true truth" which preserves it from the errors and the snares of the world, it would, if possible, liberate all men from darkness and the shadows of death.

Speaking of this condition of the soul, St. Teresa says:

When a soul has reached this state, it has not merely desires to serve God: His Majesty also gives it strength to carry these desires into effect. No way in which it thinks it may serve God can be set before it into which it will not fling itself; and yet it is doing nothing, because, as I say, it sees clearly that nothing is of any value save pleasing God. The trouble is that no such task presents itself to people who are as worthless as I. . . .

Do Thou strengthen and prepare my soul first of all, Good of all good, my Jesus, and do Thou then ordain means whereby I may do something for Thee, for no one could bear to receive as much as I have done and pay nothing in return. . . .

and corporal being that it no longer depends on me to arouse in my heart any affection of joy or sorrow, save what He wills. Neither does my spirit give itself to any occupation save what He proposes." On another occasion the saint heard these words: "I desire that you should live as if you did not live, letting Me live in thee. I am thy life and you shall not live except in Me and through Me. I wish you to work as if you did not work, letting Me work in thee and through thee, and abandoning to Me all thy cares. You must not have any will or you must conduct yourself as if you had none, letting Me will for thee on all occasions."

67 John 10:27.

68 Cant. j:6.

Oh, what it is for a soul which finds itself in this state to have to return to intercourse with all, to look at this farce of a life and see how ill-organized it is. . . . It is wearied by everything; it cannot run away. . . . It wanders about like one who has been sold into a strange land; its chief trouble is finding so few to join in its complaints and prayers. . . .

Its mind is now so used to thinking upon eternal truth that anything else seems to it mere child's play. It sometimes enjoys a quiet laugh when it sees serious people—men of prayer, leading the religious life—making a great fuss about niceties concerning their honour, which it has long since trampled beneath its feet. They say that discretion demands this and that the more they have of the authority due to their positions the more good they can do. But the soul knows very well that if they subordinated the authority due to their positions to the love of God they would do more good in a day than they are likely to do as it is in ten years. . . .

It is God Who is the soul of that soul; and, as He has it in His keeping, He sheds His light upon it. He seems to be continually watching over it, lest it should offend Him, and assisting and awakening it to serve Him.[69]

The soul is astonished at the divine condescension, seeing that so great a God does not disdain to be united to a lowly soul, to be made its captive, and even to be subject to it as His master. When the soul completely places itself in the hands of God, it discovers that, instead of losing, it gains complete liberty. Its passions no longer disturb it, and God Himself, whom the soul truly possesses, is pleased to give joy to the soul and to grant all its holy desires. He refuses nothing that the soul asks and, attending very lovingly to it, He treats it as if it were the only thing that He loved. For that reason, the soul, outside of itself, exclaims with St. Teresa:

Within this prison-house divine,
Prison of love whereby I live,
My God Himself to me doth give,
And liberate this heart of mine.
And, as with love I yearn and pine,
With God my prisoner, I sigh:
"I die because I do not die." [70]

What a sublime truth! Yet the worldly deem it a paradox.[71]

[69] *Life,* chap. 21.

[70] *Poems,* i.

[71] St. Augustine, *In Joan.,* 26: "Give me one who loves, and he will understand what I say. . . . But if I speak to one who is cold, he will not understand me."

In the midst of such delights the soul suffers painful anxiety that it will be unable to correspond as it should with the tenderness of divine love. It sees that the bonds of the body hinder it from loving as much as it desires and from being eternally united with its Beloved. For that reason, amid indescribable pangs, like one constrained in a difficult captivity, it cries out with the Apostle: "I am straitened between two: having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." [72]

The soul is united to Him, but the union can still be broken. The iron can be removed from the divine furnace and thus lose its fire. This fear, together with the weight of the body which depresses the soul and weighs down the mind, filled with divine thoughts,[73] forces the soul to cry out: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" [74]

How tedious is this life below,
This exile, with its griefs and pains,
This dungeon and these cruel chains
In which the soul is forced to go![75]

Straining to leave this life of woe,
With anguish sharp and deep I cry:
"I die because I do not die." [78]

Amid these longings, these flights and ardent impulses that make the heart pass out of itself; amid these wounds of love, as sweet as they are insupportable, which the more they pain, the more they

72 Phil. 1:23.

78 Wisd. 9:15.

74 Rom. 7:24.

75 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chap. 17: "The prison in which I seem to be is the world and my chains are the bonds of my body. My soul, illumined by grace, knows what it is to be held captive apart from God and to find in itself an obstacle which impedes its sublime happiness and prevents it from reaching its end. Since the soul is extremely delicate and sensitive, this captivity causes it an indescribable pain. In the midst of its captivity, my soul receives from God a new grace which not only makes it like unto Him, but transforms it into the same thing with Him by means of a true participation in His goodness."

78 St. Teresa, *loc. cit.*

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 20: "Then came the desire for death, because this sweetness, this peace, this delectation which surpasses all description, made this earthly life unbearable to me. . . . Ah, death! Death! Life to me was a sorrow greater than any other sorrow. . . . I fell in a faint upon the earth, . . . crying out: O Lord, Lord, have pity on me! Take me! Take me!"

Dark Night, II, 13: "And this is that impatient love wherein the soul cannot long subsist without gaining its desire or dying."

delight, and which the soul does not wish to cure, but rather to irritate; the excess of love sometimes triumphs. Then the precious soul, so pure and fervent and deified, after perfuming the earth with the heavenly fragrance of its virtues and manifesting so prodigious an activity for men that it leaves an everlasting mark, succeeds at last, by a supreme effort, by one of those energetic flights of the spirit, in breaking the chains of its prison. It finds itself freed from the body and flies to be engulfed forever in the ocean of infinite Goodness, to enjoy it at will, with no more fear of losing it.

This happy transit is in no way like that sad death whose specter terrifies. It is not the dread dissolution so bitter to the sinner.[77] It is, rather, a joyful farewell and a honeymoon.[78] It is a renewal that is glorious and most joyful. It is the long-desired transfiguration; or better, the manifestation of the glory of the sons of God which the soul had been awaiting so earnestly.[79]

But if the throbbing desires of seeing the Lord are not satisfied, and the soul finds that it must sojourn on this earth for a while longer in order to perform further services for God and to increase its merits for future glory, it is not on that account discomfited. It resigns itself joyfully to the will of God.[80] It tempers its longings by engaging in heroic deeds with a remarkable activity and with

77 Ecclus. 41:1.

78 *The Living Flame,* stanza 1: "And thus the death of such souls is ever sweeter and gentler than was their whole life; for they die amid the delectable encounters and impulses of love, like the swan, which sings most sweetly when it is about to die and is at the point of death. For this reason David said: Precious is the death of the righteous; for at such a time the rivers of love of the soul are about to enter the sea, and they are so broad and motionless that they seem to be seas already. The beginning and the end unite together to accompany the righteous man as he departs and goes forth to his kingdom, and praises are heard from the ends of the earth, which are glory to the righteous man.

"When, at that time, amid these glorious encounters, the soul feels itself very near to going forth in abundance to the perfect possession of its kingdom, since it sees itself to be pure and rich and prepared for this, God permits it in this state to see His beauty and entrusts it with the gifts and virtues that He has given it, and all this turns into love and praise, since there is no leaven to corrupt the mass."

79 Rom. 8.

80 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 17: "For the joy is so great that sometimes the soul seems to be on the point of leaving the body—and what a happy death that would be!

"In this state I think it is well . . . for the soul to abandon itself wholly into the arms of God. If He is pleased to take it to Heaven, let it go; if to hell, it is not distressed, so long as it is going there with its Good. If its life is to come to an end forever, that is its desire; if it is to live a thousand years, that is its desire also. Let His Majesty treat it as His own; it no longer belongs to itself; it is given wholly to the Lord; it can cease to worry altogether."

unbelievable profit for the rest of the faithful and for the entire Church.[81] Although it cannot die bodily, it will die in spirit, when it suffers the gradual mystical death which entails a complete renovation here on earth and an incredibly glorious resurrection.

Such is the culmination of the conforming union in which a soul, with no other desire than that of God, begins to live as the worthy spouse of the Word.[82] However, the joyful captivity of the will leaves the other faculties, or at least the senses, free to a certain extent, so that they respond to their particular objects thus permitting the soul, when necessary, to occupy itself with various exercises or external works without in any way withdrawing the heart from its center of attraction. This constitutes the prayer that is called the prayer of simple union, which is as yet incomplete as regards the union of the soul's activity with the divine activity.

But when the soul loses the use of its senses, either partially or totally, and the senses themselves appear to be stupefied or dead, and when the interior faculties are totally absorbed in God and unable to attend to anything else, then is verified in the soul the complete or ecstatic union. In this state all the powers of the soul are engulfed in the Divinity and they come forth truly deified and rejuvenated with new vigor and facility for all things. The will is permeated with an overpowering love which the Holy Ghost pours forth in it like a divine unction, and the intellect is illumined with the brilliant light of the Word by which it perceives those wonderful secrets which our lips can express but rarely and with great difficulty. Even the memory is so occupied that it can recall nothing but the divine wonders.[83]

81 Sauvé, *Le culte du C. de Jésus,* p. 26: "The union of the soul with God cannot help but be fruitful; and the more perfect it is, the more fruitful. Hence there are no souls more fruitful and efficacious . . . than those that are united to God by the incomparable intimacy of the mystical states. After the sacraments, these souls are the most efficacious lightning-rods of divine justice and the most powerful sources of sanctification."

"The divine heart," says St. Margaret Mary, "desires that we love with works rather than words. Love seeks deeds, for love is never idle. Pure love gives no rest to the soul; it makes the soul work, suffer, and keep silence."

82 St. Bernard, *Semio in Cant.,* 3: "Such conformity weds the soul to the Word. . . . I have said too little; it is a contract, an embrace wherein willing and not-willing are the same. The two are made one in spirit."

83 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 21: "When my soul reached the point at which God began to grant me this great favour, my troubles ceased, and the Lord gave me strength to escape from them. Meeting occasions of sin and being with people who

Sometimes the full use of the external senses is not completely lost. These function somewhat, especially in the beginning, although with difficulty. Anything spoken or sung near the person is heard as if from afar off, and all objects are perceived in a confused manner. The interior faculties are not to be considered dead, but only asleep to everything outside. While the soul is thus absorbed in God, it has not the strength necessary to be at the same time occupied with exterior things. If during this sweet captivity charity or obedience oblige the soul to perform some action, the soul must do extreme violence to self in order to accomplish the deed. This causes no little damage. To attend to external activity most souls in this state must relax to some extent the interior attention which holds them fast. Everything they see causes distaste and repugnance. All things seem strange to them; as if they had never seen them before. They are citizens of heaven and fellow citizens of the saints; gazing upon the heavenly beauties, they consider this world base and vile. They lament at seeing a prolongation of their exile on earth where they consider themselves mere strangers and travelers.[84] Such souls

were wont to distract me had now no more effect on me than if they had not been there. Indeed, what had previously been apt to harm me now became a help to me; everything was a means by which I was enabled to know and love God the better, to realize what I owed Him and to be grieved at having been what I once was.

"I understand clearly that it is all the work of the Lord. I think, therefore, the souls on whom the Lord bestows these favours, and who walk in humility and fear, ever realizing that all is due to the Lord Himself and in no wise to our efforts, may safely mix with any kind of company whatsoever. However distracting and vicious such company may be, it will have no effect on them nor will it in any way move them; on the contrary, as I have said, it will help them and be a means whereby they may derive the greater profit. It is strong souls that are chosen by the Lord to profit others, though their strength does not come from themselves. For, when the Lord brings a soul to this state, He gradually communicates to it very great secrets.

"In this state of ecstasy occur true revelations, great favours and visions, all of which are of service in humbling and strengthening the soul and helping it to despise the things of this life and to gain a clearer knowledge of the reward which the Lord has prepared for those who serve Him."

84 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 16: "This soul would fain see itself free: eating is killing it, sleep brings it anguish. It finds itself in this life spending its time upon comforts, yet nothing can comfort it but Thee; it seems to be living against nature, for it no longer desires to live to itself, but only to Thee.

"O my true Lord and Glory, what a cross—light and yet most heavy—hast Thou prepared for those who attain to this state! Light, because it is sweet; heavy, because there come times when there is no patience that can endure it: never would the soul desire to be free from it save to find itself with Thee. When it remembers that as yet it has rendered Thee no service and that by living it can still serve Thee, it

are aliens amid a barbarous people and they must keep watch over themselves lest they fall into snares and perish or place themselves in danger of losing their rich treasures.

Were it not that such souls understand that they must leave God for God (for He Himself moves them to it), never again would they desire association with men. When, moved by divine love, holy abnegation, and ardent zeal, they come to deal with men, nothing can harm them, for they are filled with the gifts of wisdom and counsel for knowing how to conduct themselves in all things. Rather, everything is beneficial to them and inflames them with new zeal.

Sometimes, however, if their union is not yet intense, such souls are liable to be led by their own individualistic spirit and purely human considerations. As a result they place themselves in great danger, for if they abandon the interior too much for the exterior, they will eventually depart completely from themselves; that is, from that center within themselves where the kingdom of God is to be found, that center which is the source of all their light and strength. Then, thinking themselves to be "all things to all men," they will be guided by certain worldly views. Thus they become so worldly that they are in danger of losing the spirit which they possess, instead of Christianizing and sanctifying others. Therefore prudent souls, filled with a salutary fear, do not emerge from their solitude unless prompted by charity or duty. Even in the midst of the most arduous tasks they persevere in the ineffable union with God which preserves them from the dangers to which they would be exposed if they abandoned themselves completely to external things.[85]

The soul living in habitual union is always drawing closer to God. Once it has completed its tasks and has fulfilled all its obligations, it again returns to occupy itself solely in loving and contemplating Him who possesses it so intimately. Sometimes also in the

would gladly take up a much heavier cross and never die until the end of the world. It sets no store by its own repose if by forfeiting this it can do Thee a small service. It knows not what to desire, but it well knows that it desires nothing else but Thee."

85 Blosius, *Institutions,* chap, z: "Avoid dangers and occasions of sin; love solitude; live in retirement. In that way you will advance in true virtue. But when charity or some other reasonable cause demands, converse humbly and affably with men. Flee from idleness as from a most harmful poison."

midst of their activity and external occupations many of these persons remain absorbed and work without adverting to their activity. Usually, however, the Lord moderates His communications somewhat at such times so that these souls will not do too much violence to themselves and will work with greater facility.[88]

Souls thus united are consumed with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbor. In exchange for their neighbors' being converted and saved so that they may eternally adore Him whom all tongues together could never sufficiently praise, these souls would joyfully abandon themselves to all manner of sacrifice and even the most rigorous torments. Seeing the great number of wretched sinners who are lost for all eternity, and realizing their own inability to remedy such an evil, holy souls suffer indescribable torments and blame themselves for not being able to free sinners from their errors nor to change their perverse wills.[87] They love

86 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* III, 7: "If God did not withdraw at intervals and if He did not temper the ardors of this love, the body would burst and fall to pieces. . . . The soul, freed from its bonds, would ascend to heaven. . . . But as yet this happy hour has not arrived. The soul must purify itself in sorrow and in trials. It must give even greater evidence of prayer, union with God, abandonment, and sacrifice. Sometimes the soul will appear to the world as useless because, as a result of its raptures, it cannot occupy itself immediately in worldly affairs and domestic duties. . . . But this apparent idleness is not harmful either to the soul or to men, because it receives a secret compensation from the divine goodness for everything that it was unable to accomplish . . . and its trust will never be in vain."

St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 17: "It happens at certain seasons, very often indeed, . . . that, when the will is in union, the soul realizes that the will is captive and rejoicing, and that it alone is experiencing great quiet, while, on the other hand, the understanding and the memory are so free that they can attend to business and do works of charity. This may seem to be just the same as the Prayer of Quiet of which I spoke, but it is really different—partly because in that prayer the soul would fain neither stir nor move and is rejoicing in that holy repose which belongs to Mary, while in this prayer it can also be a Martha. Thus the soul is, as it were, occupied in the active and the contemplative life at one and the same time: it is doing works of charity and also the business pertaining to its mode of life, as well as busying itself with reading. Those in this state, however, are not wholly masters of themselves and they know very well that the better part of the soul is elsewhere."

87 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* IV, chap. 3: "I am an abyss of miseries and a cause of every kind of evil because my sins prevent me from placing myself as a wall between Thee and sinners, to draw upon myself all the strokes of Thy justice. . . . Would that I could change myself into a water that would wash all souls and stifle in them the ardors of pernicious self-love! . . . My impotency grieves me because it prevents me from correcting the evil which Thou, O divine Word, hast shown to me. Would that I could be in all places without being in one particular place. Would that I could approach to Thee, unite myself with Thee, remain in Thee forever to be of help to my neighbor."

God with an intense, pure, and disinterested love solely because God merits all their love. Hence their ardent desire to please Him makes them abandon their repose and the delights which they enjoy in His presence as soon as it is the hour to be occupied in His divine service. This costs them a heroic act of courage.[88]

Without such heroism these souls would be unable to persevere in the state of union and unable to enjoy the interior divine communications. Seeking rather themselves and their own gain, they would break or weaken the bonds of that union. Thus devout souls that permit themselves to be led according to their own desires and their own spirit are gradually abandoned by God and begin to experience many illusions. Certain indiscreet spiritual directors (miracle-seekers, as they are commonly called) are greatly responsible for this condition. Since they are not as well versed as they ought to be in the things of God, they measure the advance of a soul by the favors which that soul receives, or which they think it receives, and not by the sacrifices which it performs. Giving importance to what they ought not, unwittingly they fill the soul with the smoke of vanity and place it in great danger.[89]

The interior communications of true union are felt so keenly that he who has once experienced them can have no doubt that they are from God. He will be able to distinguish readily between the

88Blessed Raymond writes of St. Catherine of Siena (*Life,* II, i): "She told me many times that when the Lord commanded her to leave her solitude and converse with men, she experienced a pain so intense that it seemed as if her heart would break. Only God Himself could constrain her to obey such a command. And when she would feel sad at being deprived of her sweet Love, He would comfort and console her with the words: 'Be calm, My beloved daughter; it is necessary that all justice be fulfilled and that My grace be made fruitful in you and in others.' 'Lord,' she would reply, 'Thy will, not mine, be done. I am all darkness; Thou art all light; I am she who is not, Thou art He who is. I am total ignorance, Thou art the Wisdom of the Father. . . . But how shall I ever be useful to souls?' Then the Lord would answer: 'In these times, when the pride of men is so very great, . . . I shall send to them women who are ignorant and lowly by nature, but wise and powerful by grace, so that they will confuse the proud.' "

80 Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, chap. 18: "If the spiritual father has an inclination toward revelations of such a kind that they mean something to him, or satisfy or delight his soul, it is impossible but that he will impress that delight and that aim upon the spirit of his disciple, even without realizing it, unless the disciple be more advanced than he; and, even in this case, he may well do him grievous harm if he continue therein." He adds later (chap. 30): "Souls must not be given into the charge of any kind of a director, since it is a thing of such importance in so grave a matter whether one goes astray or acts rightly."

divine reality and any type of illusion which the inexperienced will naively accept as a true union.[80] True union can always be identified by the soul's ardent longings for death, if it should be the will of God, and meanwhile the desire to suffer, to work, and to endure reproaches for His sake, without any regard for human considerations.

One can possibly attain some degree or mode of the union of conformity by the ordinary paths of asceticism, but the immediate passage to the higher degrees of this union is impossible. The conforming union completely transcends the ordinary type of progress and the usual manner of human operation. It is almost exclusively a work of the Holy Ghost, the director and renewer, who leads souls to the promised land and effects the total transformation of all who abandon themselves to Him completely.

APPENDIX

1. True Union with Christ and the Folly of Love

Speaking of the prayer of union in its early stages, before it becomes fused with the prayer of quiet, St. Teresa (*Life*, chaps. 16, 17) says:

This state is a sleep of the faculties, which are neither wholly lost nor yet can understand how they work. The pleasure and sweetness and delight are incomparably greater than in the previous state, for the water of grace rises to the very neck of the soul, so that it is unable to go forward, and has no idea how to do so, yet neither can it turn back: it would fain have the fruition of exceeding great glory. . . . This seems to me to be nothing less than an all but complete death to everything in the world

[80] *Interior Castle*, fifth mansions, chap. 1: "And I shall venture to affirm that, if this is indeed union with God, the devil cannot enter or do any harm; for his Majesty is in such close contact and union with the essence of the soul that he will not dare to approach, nor can he even understand this secret thing. . . . God implants Himself in the interior of that soul in such a way that, when it returns to itself it cannot possibly doubt that God has been in it, and it has been in God; so firmly does this truth remain within it that, although for years God may never grant it that favour again, it can neither forget it nor doubt that it has received it. . . . If anyone has not that certainty, I should say that what he has experienced is not union of the whole soul with God, but only union of one of the faculties or some one of the many other kinds of favour which God grants to the soul."

and a fruition of God. I know no other terms in which to describe it or explain it, nor does the soul, at such a time, know what to do: it knows not whether to speak or to be silent, whether to laugh or to weep. This state is a glorious folly, a heavenly madness, in which true wisdom is acquired, and a mode of fruition in which the soul finds the greatest delight. . . .

The faculties retain only the power of occupying themselves wholly with God; not one of them, it seems, ventures to stir, nor can we cause any of them to move except by trying to fix our attention very carefully on something else, and even then I do not think we could entirely succeed in doing so. Many words are spoken, during this state, in praise of God, but, unless the Lord Himself puts order into them, they have no orderly form. The understanding, at any rate, counts for nothing here; the soul would like to shout praises aloud, for it is in such a state that it cannot contain itself—a state of delectable disquiet. Already the flowers are opening: see, they are beginning to send out their fragrance. The soul would like everyone to see her now, and become aware of her glory, to the praise of God, and help her to sing His praises. . . .

O God, what must that soul be like when it is in this state! It would fain be all tongue, so that it might praise the Lord. It utters a thousand holy follies, striving ever to please Him Who thus possesses it. . . . What torments could have been set before her at such a time which she would not have found it delectable to endure for her Lord's sake? She sees clearly that, when the martyrs suffered their torments, they did hardly anything of themselves, for the soul is well aware that fortitude comes from somewhere outside itself. But what will the soul experience when it regains its senses and goes back to live in the world and has to return to the world's preoccupations and formalities? . . . Oh, what great freedom we enjoy! It makes us look upon having to live and act according to the laws of the world as captivity!

In any one of these visits, brief as its duration may be, the Gardener . . . gives the soul water without limit; and what the poor soul could not acquire, even if it laboured and fatigued its understanding for as much as twenty years, this heavenly Gardener achieves in a moment. . . .

The virtues, then, are now stronger than they were previously, in the Prayer of Quiet, for the soul sees that it is other than it was, and does not realize how it is beginning to do great things with the fragrance that is being given forth by the flowers. It is the Lord's will that these shall open so that the soul may see that it possesses virtues. . . . The humility, too, which remains in the soul is much greater and deeper than it was previously, for it sees more clearly that it has done nothing at all of itself

save to consent that the Lord shall grant it favours and to receive them with its will.

This kind of prayer, I think, is quite definitely a union of the entire soul with God, except that His Majesty appears to be willing to give the faculties leave to understand, and have fruition of, the great things that He is now doing.

Writing to Father Rodrigo Alvarez, St. Teresa (*Spiritual Relations,* IV) says of the ecstatic union:

Where there is union of all the faculties the position is quite different. They can then do nothing, for the understanding is, as it were, dazed. The love of the will is stronger than the understanding, but the understanding does not know if the will loves, or what it is doing, in such a way as to be able to speak of it. As to the memory, my belief is that the soul has none, and cannot think at all; the senses too, in my opinion, are no longer awake, but are, at it were, lost, so that the soul may be more fully occupied in fruition.

Alvarez de Paz, *De grad, contemplat.,* V, Part III, chap. 5:

This union is a precious gift whereby God manifests Himself as present in the very center and core of the soul, by means of a most clear light, and shows Himself a most tender Lover. In this union, the memory . . . tenaciously adheres to God thus manifested, . . . the intellect gazes upon Him in the most clear light of wisdom . . . so that it is unable to be diverted from Him to anything else. The will embraces Him with a most ardent love and, like a fierce fire, it seems to consume all things so that the soul no longer lives in itself nor performs any natural actions, but transfers all its attention to the tender Spouse who holds it in a close embrace. In this state . . . the soul does not act, but it receives; it does not progress, but it is carried along by force and, without waiting for its consent (although its consent is given), it is led into the chamber of incredible delight. The soul does not discourse and love; rather it finds in itself a remarkable intuition and an ardent love of God. . . . Yet the soul does not lose its own being in Him, but receives a new being which quickly absorbs the natural being. . . . This union has two characteristics: the first and principal one is the love with which God loves His spouse and is ardently loved by her, and to such an extent that the spouse swoons with love; the second and less important characteristic is an internal sweetness which fills all the powers of the soul and absorbs all its attention and desires. . . . Thus does the soul feel itself taken up by God and given the aids of His grace and a most perfect love whereby it

is made like to Him in the purity of its life. From this can be understood the words: "I am the vine; you the branches"; and also the words: He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." . . . Therefore, whatever of the spiritual or the divine is found in a man, it must be separated by a vivifying love from all that is earthly and corporeal. In this way a division is made between the spirit and the mind; that is, between spirituality and animality or sensuality. The precious is separated from the vile. Since God is spirit and since likeness is the cause of union, it is evident why a spirit thus cleansed is united to the divine Spirit.

2. Effects of the Ecstatic Union

St. Teresa says (*Life,* chap. 19) that after this type of prayer, the soul is left so full of courage that it would be greatly comforted if at that moment, for God's sake, it could be hacked to pieces. It is then that it makes heroic resolutions and promises, that its desires become full of vigour, that it begins to abhor the world and that it develops the clearest realization of its own vanity. The benefits that it receives are more numerous and sublime than any which proceed from the previous states of prayer; and its humility is also greater, for it clearly sees how by no efforts of its own it could either gain or keep so exceeding and so great a favour. It also sees clearly how extremely unworthy it is—for in a room bathed in sunlight not a cobweb can remain hidden. It sees its own wretchedness. So far is vainglory from it that it cannot believe it could ever be guilty of such a thing. For now it sees with its own eyes that of itself it can do little or nothing. . . . The soul realizes that it has deserved to go to hell, yet its punishment is to taste glory. It becomes consumed in praises of God as I would fain become now. . . .

It begins to show signs of being a soul that is guarding the treasures of Heaven and to be desirous of sharing them with others and to beseech God that it may not be alone in its riches. Almost without knowing it, and doing nothing consciously to that end, it begins to benefit its neighbors, and they become aware of this benefit because the flowers have now so powerful a fragrance as to make them desire to approach them. They realize that the soul has virtues, and, seeing how desirable the fruit is, would fain help it to partake of it.

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 52:

The soul receives the gift of loving God and divine things with a love similar to the absolutely true love with which God has loved us. It feel»

that rhe immense God is within it, keeping it company. . . . It perceives Him in its very core, without any corporal form, but more clearly than one man secs another. The eyes of the soul witness a spiritual plenitude which has nothing of the body about it and about which it is impossible to say anything because both words and the imagination fail. . . . In this marvelous union, which instantaneously renews the soul and makes the body docile, the soul acquires a certitude that the Lord is truly present to it, for there is no saint or angel that could perform the things that are effected in the soul. So ineffable are these operations that I feel a keen regret at not being able to say anything that is worthy of them. . . . God embraces the soul as no father or mother have ever embraced their child. . . . Truly, the embrace wherewith Jesus Christ unites Himself to the soul is indescribable. . . . No worldly man could ever speak this secret or even believe it. . . . Jesus brings to the soul a most tender love by which it is entirely inflamed; He brings to it a light so brilliant that the soul, feeling within itself the plenitude of the goodness of the omnipotent God, is able to understand infinitely more than it is aware of. At that time the soul has a proof and a certainty that Jesus Christ dwells within it.

3. Excellency of this State

Blosius, *Speculum spirit.,* XI:

It is a wonderful thing to arrive at the exile of mystical union with God. The soul, pure, humble, resigned, and inflamed with an ardent charity, is raised above itself and, amid the resplendent clarity of the divine light which shines forth in its mind, it loses all consideration for and distinction of things. Totally enraptured with love and, as it were, annihilated, it loses itself in God. Without any intermediary, the soul is joined to Him, becomes one in spirit with Him, and is transformed in Him. As iron placed in the fire becomes fire without ceasing to be iron, so the soul becomes one with God, but not in such wise that it becomes the same substance and nature as He is.

Here the soul is at rest, ceasing its own activities in order to receive the divine activity with unspeakable peace and joy. So great is the delight which the soul enjoys that it seems to it that heaven and earth and all things therein have melted away and vanished. . . . This is the unity and simplicity where God dwells. Having found the eternal Word, the soul possesses also His immeasurable riches.

Blessed is the soul that is raised above all created things and even its own activity whose memory is stripped of all sorts of images, and experiences simple purity. Its mind perceives the most brilliant irradiations of

the Sun of justice and knows the divine truth; its will experiences the fire of a tranquil love, the contact of the Holy Ghost, which, like a living fountain, gushes forth in streams of eternal sweetness. Thus is the soul introduced to sublime union with God.

But souls that are admitted to this union should return to their own proper activity, once the divine operation ceases. They should return to their holy meditations, good works, and ordinary exercises, seeking to keep themselves humble, persisting in the desire for spiritual progress, and conducting themselves in all things as if they were to begin a better life.

Says the same author (*Inst, spir.,* chap, i):

When the human spirit receives this mystical wisdom in the divine union and is illumined by eternal truth, its faith is verified, its hope is strengthened, and its charity is further inflamed. Therefore, if all the wise men of the world should say to one who has experienced this union: "You deceive yourself, unhappy soul, for your faith is untrue, "the soul would intrepidly reply: "It is you who are deceived. I have complete certitude as to the truth of my faith." . . . Indeed, this soul knows the Divinity better than all the great masters, if they themselves have not vet been admitted into the holy of holies and into the secret chamber of the eternal King. God reveals to such souls the truths of the Scriptures and He gives them a taste for the Gospels. Since they possess true wisdom, more through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost than by the reading of many books, they see clearly and know for certain what must be done or omitted.

4. Perfect Union and Disinterested Love

Sister Barbara wrote (*Vida,* p. 235):

How clearly everything can be seen when God comes to the soul! I say this because it seems to me that I feel my God within my soul. He is so closely united to it and it to Him that I no longer possess my soul, but it is rather He who possesses it. Whether others speak to me or not, whether they treat me well or ill, God now possesses me, both in tribulation and in consolation. I now have no desire for anything, for I have no other desire than that of my God. I know not how to explain myself, but I feel that God is very close to me. . . . I feel Him as if He were within my very soul, and my heart faints away with longings to love Him. . . . These longings are not for any desire of glory, they arc purely for God. Therefore, even if there were no heaven, I would love

Him just the same, because I love Him in a disinterested manner. . . . If I were to know that I could serve His greater glory by suffering all the pains of hell for eternity, my soul loves Him so intensely that it would be content to do just that so that my God might have that greater glory. Yet I know well that my God does not desire that, but I say it because I have a desire to suffer much for God, and this desire is so strong that everything else seems little to me.

This is the disinterested love which seeks good for the sake of good and not for any selfish aims. This love is not to be thought of as that which was invented by Kant and proclaimed by Seneca, for the very ones who vainly proposed a morality without sanction did not even know how to fulfill it with sanctions. Not possessing the truth, they could not know what is the true good, the plenitude of desirable being.

Those who are perfect and whose eyes of the heart have been illumined by the ardent charity which casts out fear know the only true and complete Good. They see that it deserves to be loved for itself and not for any other motives; that it should be preferred above all other goods, even if there were no sanctions. Yet sanctions are indispensable for the imperfect, who are always in the majority and who practice good with the help of the law of fear which no longer rules the perfect. "The law is not made for the just man, but for the unjust and disobedient" (I Tim. 1:9). "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18).

St. Bernard, *Sermo 83 in Cant.,* nos. 4, 5:

God asks to be feared as Lord, honored as Father, and loved as Spouse. . . . Love is a great thing, but it admits of various grades or degrees and the supreme grade is that of the spouse. This love is sufficient to itself and it has within itself its own merit and reward. The sons love also, but they think in terms of the heritage and are fearful of losing it. I suspect that this type of love is one that must be supported by the hope of further goods. Pure love, on the other hand, desires nothing, for it is not a mercenary love. . . . Such is the love of a spouse, for she is what she is solely because of love. All her hope and all her good lies in love.

Then St. Bernard proceeds to describe the love of a mature son who is nourished by solid foods (great works) and does not engage in the doings of children (the consolations enjoyed by imperfect

souls), but longs for the heavenly heritage on which his thoughts are continually centered. Then the saint adds (nos. 8, 9): "But there is yet another love more sublime than this love of a son, and this type of love seeks and desires nought but God alone, for the heart is now totally purified. The soul now seeks nothing of its own, neither its own happiness, its own glory, or anything at all by reason of any special love of itself. It dedicates itself completely to God in order to adhere to Him, possess Him, and find its delight in Him."

CHAPTER V

The Deifying Transforming Union

sSSsSSSsSSSsSSsiSSsSSSsSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSS&sSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSS&sSSsSSSs

In spite of the longings of the soul which "dies because it does not die," the divine Spouse desires that the beloved should for a time continue to suffer, love, and progress in charity. This will continue until He has made it a living image and faithful reproduction of Himself, so that in His name and by His power the soul will carry on the mission which He Himself had on this earth.

The Mystical Espousal

To this end, after He has purified, beautified, and disposed the soul, as we shall soon see, He celebrates with it the mystical espousal by means of a formal and solemn pact. He gives the soul the symbolic ring [1] or effects an exchange of hearts, saying as He did to St. Catherine of Siena: "Be mindful of Me, and I shall be mindful of thee"; or to St. Teresa: "Henceforth, as My true spouse, you will

[1] Dr. Imbert-Goubeyre *(La stigmatisation et l'extase divine,* II, 8) has compiled a list of 77 persons who were admitted to the mystical nuptials, although circumstances do not determine precisely whether all of these were the true and permanent marriage or the simple espousal. In the cases listed, there are 55 examples of the bequeathing of the ring, and of these instances 43 were given to stigmatics.

Sauvé, *Etats,* p. 85: "How full of significance is the symbol of the ring sent by God to a St. Catherine of Siena or a St. Rose of Lima! What marvels are contained in that narrow band! Yet these are nothing more than external signs, preludes to the perfect fusion of the soul with Jesus and His divinity."

The rings of St. Catherine of Siena and Blessed Hosanna of Mantua were always visible, but to them alone, while St. Catherine de Ricci's ring was often visible to others. It appeared to her as a ring of gold adorned with a diamond, but to others it was visible as a blood-red circle with a projection of the flesh similar to an inset for a precious stone. Sometimes she saw it emit rays of splendor and she worked many wonders with it. The ring was visible even after her death at the age of seventy-nine, and she had first received it at the age of nineteen.

be attentive to My honor"; or to St. Rose of Lima: "Rose of My Heart, be thou My spouse." 2 He commands such souls to treat Him with confidence and love and always to call Him by the most sweet name of Spouse.3

Before, celebrating this pact, God is accustomed many times to manifest Himself to the soul in all the splendor of His glorified humanity. He does this to impress the soul with His goodness and beauty so that, knowing the good which is promised, it will be inflamed with an ardent desire to possess Him as soon as possible. These manifestations are sometimes repeated at frequent intervals and over a long period of time until the soul is properly prepared for the espousal. Thus also the soul is comforted in the midst of the terrible trials by which its fidelity must yet be tried before it can enter fully into that grade of prayer which is so eminent that it is actually the beginning of a life which is totally divine.4

2 To which St. Rose replied: "I am Thine, O King of eternal majesty, and I shall be Thine forever."

3 Ven. Sister Barbara once heard the following words from the lips of the Savior: "Thou art all Mine, and I am all thine." A few days later, she perceived that He had grappled her heart with a chain and attached it to His own divine heart, saying: "I do this so that you may be so united to My will in all things that you will never desire anything apart from Me and that you will be one with Me." "From that moment," she adds, "I was so bound to my God and so closely united with Him that I can say truly that between God and myself there was but one will. There is no comparison between the union which I formerly enjoyed and the intimate union which I began to enjoy from that day on." Later she saw that a white veil and a crown had been placed on her and the Virgin presented her to her divine Son, who took a ring from His finger and placed it on hers, saying that henceforth she should always call Him by the sweet name of Spouse and that she should take great care to preserve that veil intact so that she might return it without any tears or lesions.

The Ven. Father Bernard Hoyos, after receiving Communion on the feast of the Assumption in 1730, heard the angels sing: "Behold, the Bridegroom is coming, go forth to meet Him" (Matt. 25:6). In a vision of the imagination he saw the Savior, accompanied by His holy Mother and many saints, and in an intellectual vision he contemplated the most holy Trinity. His enraptured soul heard the Savior say, "I espouse thee, O beloved soul, in an eternal espousal of love. . . . Now thou art Mine and I am thine. . . . Thou are Bernard of Jesus and I am Jesus of Bernard. . . . All Mine is thine; all thine is Mine. That which I am by nature, thou dost share through grace. Thou and I are one."

4 *The Living Flame,* stanza 2: "And, in order that we may know what debts are these which the soul now recognizes as paid, it must be known that in the ordinary way no soul can attain to this lofty state and kingdom of the betrothal without first having passed through many tribulations and trials, since, as is said in the Acts of the Apostles, it behooves us to enter through many tribulations into the kingdom of the heavens; which things have in this state passed, for henceforth the soul, being purified, has no more suffering.

"The trials which are suffered by those that are to come to this state arc of liner

The words of the espousal are usually of themselves efficacious or, as St. John of the Cross says, "substantial," because, like the *fiat* of the Creator, they produce the effect which they express. With the pronouncing of these words the soul finds itself transformed. It is now no longer what it was previously. All its aims have been changed and have become so divine that no self-interest is left in the soul. All its interest now lies in the glory of God, the prosperity of the Church, and the welfare of souls. It pays no heed to its own interests for it has placed them in the hands of the sweet Master,[5] and He is charged to care for the soul and see that it is not bothered by these interests while engaged in His divine service.[6]

kinds, namely: trials and afflictions, fears and temptations which come from the world, and that in many ways—temptations and aridities and afflictions relating to sense; tribulations, darknesses, perils, abandonments, temptations and other trials relating to the spirit, so that in this way the soul may be purged according both to its spiritual and to its sensual part, in the way that we described in the exposition of the fourth line of the first stanza. And the reason why these trials are necessary for the soul that is to reach this state is that, just as a liquor of great excellence is filaced only in a strong vessel, which has been made ready and purified, so this most ofty union cannot belong to a soul that has not been fortified by trials and temptations, and purified with tribulations, darknesses and perils, one of which classes purifies and fortifies sense and the other refines and purifies and disposes the spirit. For even as impure spirits, in order to be united with God in glory, pass through the pains of fire in the life to come, even so, in order to reach the union of perfection in this life, they must pass through the fire of these said pains, a fire which burns more violently in some and less so in others, and for longer in some than in others, according to the degree of union to which God is pleased to raise them and conformably with the degree of purgation which they have to undergo.

"By means of these trials whereinto God leads the soul and the senses, the soul gradually acquires virtues, strength and perfection, together with bitterness, for virtue is made perfect in weakness, and is wrought by the experience of sufferings. For iron cannot adapt itself and be subservient to the intelligence of the artificer, unless he use fire and a hammer, like the fire which Jeremiah says that God put into his understanding, saying: He sent fire into my bones and taught me. And Jeremiah likewise says of the hammer: Thou hast chastised me, Lord, and I have been taught. Even so the Preacher says: He that is not tempted, what can he know, and he that hath no experience knoweth little" (Ecclus. 34:9).

5 See Ps. 54:23; 1 Pet. 5:7.

6 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 39: "Once, when I was very restless and upset, unable to recollect myself, battling and striving, turning all the time in thought to things that were not perfect, and imagining I was not as detached as I used to be, I was afraid, seeing how wicked I was, that the favours which the Lord had granted me might be illusions. In short, my soul was in great darkness. While I was distressed in this way, the Lord began to speak to me and told me not to be troubled: the state in which I found myself would show me how miserable I should be if He withdrew from me; while we lived in this flesh we were never safe. . . . But, He added, I was not to think myself forgotten, for He would never leave me, though I myself must do all that lay in my power. This the Lord said to me compassionately and tenderly. . . .

Thus all self-regard ceases, and the soul is concerned only with loving, pleasing, and serving its divine Spouse as best it can. Even the ardent desire which the soul formerly had—to die so that it might go to Him and find enjoyment in Him and thereby avoid all danger of offending Him—even that desire comes to an end. The soul is inebriated with love. It seeks only to work and to suffer as much as possible for the glory of God and the good of souls, even if it means the deprivation of all consolation? Suffering, which formerly caused great dismay, has now been changed into something of a vital necessity. The soul cannot and cares not to live without suffering for the glory of its Beloved. Because of the love now animating it, the soul considers insipid and intolerable any life which is not, like His, filled with privations and pains. The soul is not ignorant of the fact that, like Him, it must live as a victim of expiation and propitiation.[8]

If its own salvation preoccupies the soul, it is not out of self-interest but pure divine love which constrains the soul to seek union with its God. If it were God's pleasure that the soul should suffer the pains of hell for the good of some other soul and if in so doing it could there continue to love and serve God, it would offer itself gladly, as did St. Paul and St. Catherine, who desired to be anathematized by Christ for the good of their brethren.

"Often His Majesty says to me, as a sign of His great love: 'Now thou art Mine and I am thine.' There are some words which I am in the habit of repeating to myself—and I believe I mean what I say. They are: 'What do I care about myself, Lord, or about anything but Thee?' When I remember what I am, these words and signs of love cause me the very greatest confusion; for, as I believe I have said on other occasions and as I sometimes say now to my confessor, I think more courage is needed for receiving these favors than for suffering the sorest trials."

7 "When you see a soul abandon all things in order to unite itself whole-heartedly to the Word," says St. Bernard *(In Cant.,* sermon 85), "not to live except for the Word, led only by the Word, knowing through the Word what it must do for the Word, and able to say: 'Jesus Christ is my life; for me, to die is gain,' then salute that soul as the spouse of the Word."

8 Sauvé, *Etats mystiques,* p. 96: "In order to arrive at so exalted a life, souls must pass through terrible purifications. From their experience of divine things, they draw a great appreciation and love for the cross. Mortifying every imperfection, they live in a manner that is much more intense than can be conceived. If the love of God and His cross which holds them enraptured causes you dejection; if the accents with which they express this love seem as so much foolishness to you; place the fault on yourself and know that you do not understand what it is to deal with infinite goodness, love, and sanctity. Actually, only these souls are in possession of complete truth; they alone are logical. Those of us who are terrified by their ardent love and devouring zeal are poor laggards, more or less blind, cowards, lazy and poorly-instructed in the ways of the love of God."

The valor of such souls surpasses all heroism. Once when St. Catherine of Siena was in imminent danger of shipwreck, she noticed that her confessor, Blessed Raymond of Capua, was terrified, as were all the members of the crew. Turning to Raymond, she said, "Father, why are you frightened? What difference should this make to you? We have no interests but those of God and His Church. He will take care of us." God actually did so, and they were delivered from that danger.®

The disinterestedness of these generous souls extends even to their prayer and divine colloquies and it costs them dearly to abandon them, for they have found there such sweet consolation and such great progress. But, when the Spouse calls them to sacrifice themselves for Him, they do not answer: "I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" 10 Rather, if the good of a soul demands it, they immediately and without complaint abandon the flowery couch of prayer and divine consolations. They leave the pleasant repose of Mary for the efficient activity of Martha. But they are not at all perturbed as was Martha herself, for in the midst of a prodigious external activity, internally they remain tranquil and recollected, conversing with God in their hearts as if they were all alone. There is no danger that they will soil their feet with the dust of earth or be contaminated by a worldly atmosphere. Rather, they sanctify the ground which they tread and they purify and perfume the air with the virtue which they exhale.

8 On another occasion, when Blessed Raymond was rejoicing because he had not fallen into the hands of the enemies who were seeking to kill him, St. Catherine wrote to him: "You have taken great joy in the fact that God should condescend to your weakness. O my poor and cowardly Father! How happy should your soul and mine have been if your blood could have cemented another stone in the wall of our holy Church! Truly, we have cause for weeping at seeing that your small virtue has not merited so great a blessing. ... As full-grown men, let us run to the field of battle. Let us be firm, with the cross in front and behind so that we cannot flee. . . . Submerge yourself in the crucified Christ, bathe yourself in His blood, clothe yourself in His blood, lament for yourself in His blood, rejoice in His blood, lose your weakness and blindness in the blood of the stainless Lamb and in His light run forward as a fortified knight seeking the glory of God, the welfare of the Church, and the salvation of souls in His blood" (Letter 106).

On yet another occasion, she wrote: "By this it will be known who are the true servants of God: if they abandon all consolations and the comforts of their sweet retirement to go forth where the good of the Church and of souls calls them" (Letter 69).

10 Cant. 5:3.

So it was with St. Catherine of Siena, St. Philip Neri, St. Teresa of Avila, and many other great saints who, at the end of their life, found it necessary to sacrifice their long hours of contemplation for activity. They lost nothing on that account, but they made great progress in charity at the same time that they helped countless souls.11 It is not to be wondered at that to pass from simple union to such a divine state they should have had to pass through great trials and tribulations, dying again and again to themselves in order to live with Jesus Christ in God.

Although the union of the mystical espousal is so wonderful and continual, it is not yet absolutely stable or indissoluble. There yet remain for the soul long periods of absence, obscurities, and desolations, and these are all the more painful as the soul's love is more ardent and its longings for complete transformation are more keen. Moreover, the soul can still fall into serious danger, which makes it necessary for it to keep a close watch over itself and to proceed with caution lest it expose itself to the loss of all its good and a final and permanent abandonment.

That this union be strengthened and become so intimate and indissoluble that the soul attains full certainty of never more being disturbed, new proofs of fidelity and love are required. The soul must be subjected to further tests and purgations which are more painful than anything previously experienced. However pure, simple, and holy the soul may appear in its sweet union of conformity with God, it is still incredibly far removed from the purity, rectitude, simplicity, and sanctity which are necessary for this other union with God which is so intimate, perfect, and stable that God becomes the soul's *all in all* and the soul is completely lost to itself and transformed in Him. These purgations will erase the last vestiges of the earthly man and change the soul into an angel in human

11 Once, after St. Catherine of Siena had received a vision of the divine essence, the glory of the saints, and the pitiful condition of the reprobated, she was filled with horror at having to return to earth, but the Lord said to her: "The salvation of many souls demands this. You will no longer live as you did formerly. You will abandon your retirement and you will run through the towns saving souls. I am always with you; I shall lead you and carry you. I shall entrust to you the honor of My name, and you will teach My doctrine to both the great and the small, to priests and religious as well as to the laity. I shall give you words and wisdom which no one will be able to resist. I shall put you in the presence of popes and rulers who govern the Church and the people so that in this way I may, as always, confound the pride of the great" (*Life*, 11, Part VI).

form. Then the soul can say in all truth that it and God are two in one Spirit.[12]

Without realizing it, the soul is filled with the remnants or traces of hidden imperfections. If these were seen by the soul, they would fill it with confusion and chagrin.[13] There remains also a subtle self-love which is all the more harmful because it is spiritual and dissimulated and is taken for a holy love. Amid the soul's sighs and longings for God and even in the raptures of divine love, the soul still seeks something of self and heeds its particular aims and intentions. It yet possesses a certain amount of attachment to spiritual consolations, thinking of self and paying too much attention to its spiritual gifts with the result that it sometimes forgets the Giver of those gifts. God demands that He be sought solely for what He is and not for any other motive. Therefore He requires that the soul should forget every created thing, however holy it may be and however necessary, so that the soul may adhere simply to the uncreated Essence. Only in this way can the soul be wed to the Word of wisdom.[14]

To this end God assails the soul with a sharp and penetrating light which illumines the most hidden folds of the heart and brings to light its many imperfections. By means of such a light the soul learns to know itself and, knowing itself, it knows Him also. It knows what things it must value and what things it must cast aside, purify,

[12] *Dark Night of the Soul,* II, 2: "The purgation of sense is only the entrance and beginning of contemplation leading to the purgation of the spirit, which . . . serves rather to accommodate sense to spirit than to unite spirit with God. But there still remain in the spirit the stains of the old man, although the spirit thinks not that this is so, neither can it perceive them; if these stains be not removed with the soap and strong lye of the purgation of this night, the spirit will be unable to come to the purity of the Divine union."

[13] Ps. 18:13: "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord."

[14] *Dark Night of the Soul,* II, 24: "As soon as these two houses of the soul have together become tranquillized and strengthened, with all their inmates—namely, the faculties and desires—and have put these inmates to sleep and made them to be silent with respect to all things, both above and below, this Divine Wisdom immediately unites itself with the soul by making a new bond of loving possession, and there is fulfilled that which is written in the book of Wisdom, in these words: *Dum quietum silentium contineret omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, omnipotens sermo tuus Domine a regalibus sedibus* (Wisd. 18:14). · ❙ · The soul cannot come to this union without great purity, and this purity is not gained without great detachment from every created thing and sharp mortification."

or rectify. So keen is this light that it dazzles and stupefies the soul; it strikes it like a thunderbolt and leaves it buried in the most frightful darkness, and during this darkness the soul experiences its complete renewal. It is configured with Christ and amid great anguish it receives the impress of His divine and living seal. In that state of darkness the soul must follow Him in His passion, death, and burial so that ultimately it will rise again with Him, totally transfigured with a life that is entirely new. The soul will not only be united to Him, but will be transformed and made one with Him.

When this union shall have been consummated and ratified by the mystical marriage, the soul will see clearly that God has taken possession of its whole being as a new vital principle which renews and divinizes it and that it is He who works and lives in the soul. To this are ordained all the terrible purgations and mystical operations of the obscure and prolonged night of the spirit which we shall speak of later because it is usually more intense after the espousal, although it begins to be experienced much earlier, during the prayer of union.

That this union may be changed from the conforming union to the transforming union, God Himself must work in the soul in a manner that is hidden, mysterious, and painful. He rids the soul of all sensible delights which it experienced in the former union wherein the delight of the spirit redounded to the senses. God seems to hide Himself now but actually He is much more intimately united to the soul. The soul is amazed at the change it now experiences. It believes itself to be abandoned, yet it finds that it is improved in every way. The change is most profitable, but the soul is unable to understand how this can be so.

At times the soul experiences God's delicate touch or that most subtle divine contact which, on renewing the soul, produces in it great flights of love. But though these things are very ardent and cause intense pain, they are not carried over to the sensible order nor do they cause the slightest change in the countenance of the person in whom they take place. All this is a great interior violence which wounds even to the death in order to destroy all human imperfections but outwardly the person remains recollected in an unchanging peace. Therefore the flights of the spirit are seldom

perceptible externally although their efficacy incomparably exceeds those which were formerly experienced and which caused the soul to break forth in sighs and other exterior manifestations.[15]

In the formidable spiritual darkness wherein the soul is buried in its mystical cocoon and is incapacitated for working by itself or for possessing any initiative at all, it believes itself to be imprisoned or buried in hell itself. Nevertheless it is gradually undergoing the mysterious change from the conforming to the transforming union although the soul itself is scarcely aware of it. It notes only that all sensible communications have vanished as well as the great delight of union which it formerly experienced and it hardly realizes what is happening until the whole transformation has taken place. In losing the consolations of the former union and in receiving the spiritual light which is so dazzling that it appears to be utter blackness and the cauterizing fire which does not touch the sensible order, the soul experiences a sort of martyrdom. Yet all this is the working of pure love, and these effects are so much loved by the soul that, if it is sufficiently animated and faithful, it will not wish them to disappear but to be increased and prolonged. The reason for this is that the soul, without knowing how, realizes that it thereby receives new life, new strength, and new desires which have nothing worldly or selfish about them.

The soul marvels at seeing itself so changed, so spiritualized, so renewed and enriched when it had thought itself miserably lost. In this mystical death the soul has found life and in every one of its

15 Father Hoyos explains (*Life,* p. 134) the difference between the sensible flights and the flights of the spirit in this way: "In the flights of sense the soul is keenly aware of the fact that its pain is the pain of love and that it is united with the Lord who wounds the soul. In the flights of the spirit there is none of this, but the soul feels that it no longer loves and that it is separated from God. The soul is ignorant of the cause of its suffering. ... In the former type of flight, the body trembles and shares in the hurt, but in the spiritual flight the body does not know what is taking place in the interior until it is finished and it does not share in this activity except by a very weak overflow. Indeed, the body is not able to suffer as intensely as the spirit. ... In the former, in order to reach the heart, these flights must first wound the breast; in the latter, it seems that they wound the heart without affecting that which is in front of the heart; that is, they wound the very core of the soul without touching any part of the body. In the sensible flights, although the wound is severe, it is not a mortal wound; but here it seems that it reduces to dust whatever it encounters and the wound is a wound unto the death. Indeed, one of these flights alone would be sufficient to take the soul right out of this life." See also St. Teresa, *Life,* chaps. 20, 21, 29, 39; *Interior Castle,* VI, chap. 2, 11; *Conceptions of the Love of God,* chap. 4.

various sufferings it sees the loving touch of the divine Artist who is sculpturing the soul to His own taste in order to make it entirely like Himself. The soul has abandoned itself blindly to the hands of God and joyfully resigned itself to let God work in it and make of it what He will, but at the same time it sees with great pain that it is despoiled of self and all its affections, desires, interests, and human manner of working.

In the measure that the soul is purified and renewed, it is able to distinguish better those delicate rays of heavenly light by which it can know the divine mysteries. This same light makes the soul suffer greatly with painful longings because the more it fills the soul with the loving knowledge of God, the more empty does the soul seem to be. The reason for this is that the soul sees that what it knows is as nothing when compared with what yet remains to be known. The soul deems it impossible ever to sound the depths of that adorable abyss which so enchants, attracts, and captivates it.

Although such souls do not advert very often to the mysterious work being effected in them or do not dare to give an account of what they are experiencing, whenever God wills that they explain it (how it is He Himself who is doing this to them), then He suggests to them the proper words by which they are able to speak of such things incomparably better than any speculative theologian. At other times, in order to better understand or more clearly explain the marvelous interior renewal which these souls perceive in an intellectual vision, the transformation is at the same time symbolized for them in an imaginative vision which manifests in their heart what is being effected invisibly and mystically in the core of their soul. That is how so many souls see that the Lord is carrying them off, changing them, inflaming them, and purifying their heart. They understand very well the mystery of this operation which is as painful as it is delightful.

Thus is verified the obscure and prolonged interior activity which renews souls that are enjoying union with God and disposes them for the mystical espousal. Later it leads them gradually to the total transformation which is required for the mystical marriage. During the preparatory renewal, amid the great raptures and flights of the soul in the midst of its sufferings, those colloquies occur which precede the celebration of the marriage and in which the soul receives

new strength that it may subject itself willingly to whatever works the divine Spirit may wish to realize in it.

The painful darkness is intermittently broken with indescribable lights and consolations. Better to say that this mystical night is a continuous and marvelous illumination in which clarity, ardor, and joy increase in proportion to the apparent darkness, desolation, and pain. Thus is the soul disposed and adorned with the divine fineries necessary to make it a worthy spouse of the Word. In this way the soul becomes one with Him through the full communication of His Spirit, and that happy union is consolidated and confirmed by an irrevocable pact.

But since the pact of the mystical marriage demands that the renewal should be complete, before we pass on to speak of the marriage itself we shall attempt, with the help of those souls that actually experienced these things, to give some idea, however remote, of the mystical night wherein these mysteries take place. We shall speak also of the bitter pains which the privileged and heroic servants of God have to suffer for a long time. All this is necessary for souls if while yet on earth they are to reach a perfect configuration with Christ and enjoy in a stable manner the first fruits of glory.

APPENDIX

1. The Divine Espousal

Interior Castle, fifth mansions, chap. 4:

All giving and taking have now come to an end and in a secret way the soul sees Who this Spouse is that she is to take. By means of the senses and faculties she could not understand in a thousand years what she understands in this way in the briefest space of time. But the Spouse, being Who He is, leaves her, after that one visit, worthier to join hands (as people say) with Him; and the soul becomes so fired with love that for her part she does her utmost not to thwart this Divine betrothal. If she is neglectful, however, and sets her affection on anything other than Himself, she loses everything, and that is a loss every bit as great as are the favours He has been granting her, which are far greater than it is possible to convey.

So, Christian souls, whom the Lord has brought to this point on your journey, I beseech you, for His sake, not to be negligent, but to withdraw from occasions of sin—for even in this state the soul is not strong enough to be able to run into them safely, as it is after the betrothal has been made—that is to say, in the Mansion which we shall describe after this one. For this communication has been no more than (as we might say) one single short meeting, and the devil will take great pains about combating it and will try to hinder the betrothal. Afterwards, when he sees that the soul is completely surrendered to the Spouse, he dare not do this, for he is afraid of such a soul as that, and he knows by experience that if he attempts anything of the kind he will come out very much the loser and the soul will achieve a corresponding gain.

2. The Exchange of Hearts

Says Father Weiss *(Apologie,* X, 21):

The exchange of hearts is a common phenomenon in the lives of the saints. Often it was outwardly manifested in a wonderful manner, as we read in the lives of St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine de Ricci, St. Lutgard, and others, but in all the saints it was, to some extent, verified internally. Hence many things in their lives are incomprehensible, for the exterior is the expression of the interior.

3. Impulses and Wounds of the Spirit

Interior Castle, sixth mansions, chap. 2:

[Before the soul is wholly united with Him, the Spouse] fills it with fervent desire, by means so delicate that the soul itself does not understand them, nor do I think I shall succeed in describing them in such a way as to be understood, except by those who have experienced it; for these are influences so delicate and subtle that they proceed from the very depth of the heart and I know no comparison that I can make which will fit the case.

All this is very different from what one can achieve in earthly matters, and even from the consolations which have been described. For often when a person is quite unprepared for such a thing, and is not even thinking of God, he is awakened by His Majesty, as though by a rushing comet or a thunderclap. Although no sound is heard, the soul is very well aware that it has been called by God, so much so that sometimes, especially at first, it begins to tremble and complain, though it feels nothing that causes it affliction. It is conscious of having been most delectably wounded, but it cannot say how or by whom; but it is certain that this is a precious

experience and it would be glad if it were never to be healed of that wound. It complains to its Spouse with words of love, and even cries aloud, being unable to help itself, for it realizes that He is present but will not manifest Himself in such a way as to allow it to enjoy Him, and this is a great grief, though a sweet and delectable one; even if it should desire not to suffer it, it would have no choice—but in any case it would never so desire. It is much more satisfying to a soul than is the delectable absorption, devoid of distress, which occurs in the Praver of Quiet. . . .

So powerful is the effect of this upon the soul that it becomes consumed with desire, yet cannot think what to ask, so clearly conscious is it of the presence of its God. Now if this is so, you will ask me what it desires or what causes it distress. What greater blessing can it wish for? I cannot say; I know that this distress seems to penetrate its very bowels; and that, when He that has wounded it draws out the arrow, the bowels seem to come with it, so deeply does it feel this love. . . .

Here all the senses and faculties are active, and there is no absorption; they are on the alert to discover what can be happening, and, so far as I can see, they cause no disturbance, and can neither increase this delectable pain nor remove it. Anyone to whom Our Lord has granted this favour will recognize the fact on reading this; he must give Him most heartfelt thanks and must not fear that it may be a deception; let his chief fear be rather lest he show ingratitude for so great a favour, and let him endeavor to serve God and to grow better all his life long and he will see the result of this and find himself receivinsr more and more. . . .

It may be that you wonder why greater security can be felt about this than about other things. For the following reasons, I think. First, because so delectable a pain can never be bestowed upon the soul bv the devil; he can give pleasures and delights which seem to be spiritual, but it is beyond his power to unite pain . . . with tranquillity and joy in the soul; for all his powers are in the external sphere, and, when he causes pain, it is never, to my mind, delectable or peaceful, but restless and combative. Secondly, this delectable tempest comes from another region than those over which he has authority. Thirdly, great advantages accrue to the soul, which, as a general rule, becomes filled with a determination to suffer for God's sake and to desire to have many trials to endure, and to be very much more resolute in withdrawing from the pleasures and intercourse of this world, and other things like them.

4. Relation of the Espousal to Mystical Marriage

The Living Flame, stanza 3 (see also *Interior Castle,* seventh mansions, chap. 2):

In this matter, however, it is well to note clearly the difference that exists between the possession of God through grace in itself alone and the possession of Him through union; for the one is a question of mutual love and the other is one of communication. There is as great a difference between these states as there is between betrothal and marriage. For in betrothal there is only a consent by agreement, and a unity of will between the two parties, and the jewels and the adornment of the bride-to-be, given her graciously by the bridegroom. But in marriage there is likewise communication between the persons, and union. During the betrothal, although from time to time the bridegroom sees the bride and gives her gifts, as we have said, there is no union between them, for this comes at the end of the betrothal. Even so, when the soul has attained to such purity in itself and in its faculties that the will is well purged of other strange tastes and desires, according to its lower and higher parts, and when it has given its consent to God with respect to all this, and the will of God and of the soul are as one in a free consent of their own, then it has attained to the possession of God through grace of will, in so far as it can be by means of will and grace; and this signifies that God has given it, through its own consent, His true and entire consent, which comes through His grace.

And this is the lofty state of spiritual betrothal of the soul with the Word, wherein the Spouse grants the soul great favours, and visits it most lovingly and frequently, wherein the soul receives great favours and delights. But these have nothing to do with those of marriage, for the former are all preparations for the union of marriage; and, though it is true that they come to the soul when it is completely purged from all creature affection (for spiritual betrothal, as we say, cannot take place until this happens), nevertheless the soul has need of other and positive preparations on the part of God, of His visits and gifts whereby He purifies the soul ever more completely and beautifies and refines it so that it may be fitly prepared for such lofty union. . . .

During the time, then, of this betrothal and expectation of marriage in the unction of the Holy Spirit, when there are choicest unctions preparing the soul for union with God, the yearnings of the caverns of the soul are wont to be extreme and delicate.

5. Entrance Into the Night of the Spirit and the Beginning of the Transforming Union

A short time before receiving the religious habit, Maria Busto, afterward Mother Mary of the Queen of the Apostles, wrote as follows to her director:

The union of my soul with God seems to have become much more intense and intimate, although much more spiritual and imperceptible than formerly. I feel as if the depth of my soul were aflame with that fire about which I have often spoken to you, though now I experience it in a different way. It is as if the flames which consume me spring forth from God Himself and unite me to Him in a manner that is impossible to explain. It is totally different from what I have told you on other occasions. What I experience now is something much more profound, interior, secret, and hidden even from myself. The suffering in this union is not mixed with any of the sensible consolations which I felt on previous occasions, but I willingly put aside even the slightest consolation because it seems to me that this union would be much more pure without them. Another thing that causes me intense suffering is that the more vividly I experience God, the more I discover the infinity which I have yet to experience; believing my soul to be full, I find myself empty, because of the great longing I have to experience even more.

Therefore, when the union is increased, the derelictions and abandonments are more horrible. Many times I feel myself interiorly consumed by the pain of loss which results from the separation of God. I find that I am unable to endure such suffering and I feel a noticeable decline even in the body. In a word, I can say that all the changes which I experience interiorly consist in suffering, but the suffering takes on various forms. Yet, thanks be to God, I desire nothing else because I believe that in this consists my only true life.

Now, Father, I notice that I am in a better state when I suffer more and, although the manner of suffering once terrified me (like the suffering in hell itself), I have almost arrived at the point of desiring it. I do not know if it is the suffering or myself that has changed.

The Night of the Spirit

That God may dwell permanently in the soul, that both He and the soul may become one, and that the soul may feel His presence in the depth of its being, it is necessary not only that the potencies be purified so as not to offer any obstacle to the divine activity or the manifestation of that activity through the infused virtues and gifts, but this purification must penetrate the very center of the soul. The soul must be raised up from the condition to which it was reduced through the Fall so that it may be in perfect harmony with the right Spirit which vivifies it and unites God and the soul in one life. In this way the Spirit becomes "the soul of its life and

the life of its soul" and the soul adheres to God in such a way that it lives more in Him than it does in itself.

This new state requires powerful and terrible purgations which are incomparably more painful than anything yet experienced. They are much more intense and subtle and so penetrating that they touch the very core of the soul. Like a burning fire and a divine astringent,[16] they leave the soul entirely purified, white, and shining. All this takes place during the night of the spirit.

St. John of the Cross, in describing the pains of the night of the senses,—which, we have already seen, are very great—considers them light indeed, when compared to those of the night of the spirit. When writing of the latter, he shudders and hardly dares to describe them. He says that they are not only terrible, but almost intolerable and that they can be compared to no other pains but those of purgatory or hell itself.[17]

It is in purgatory that the majority of just souls must endure those pains, since they did not endure them in this life. For no one can see God face to face, no one can gaze upon His sanctity and purity, without first dying to the old Adam; that is, without being completely rectified and totally purged of the last vestige of sin and the slightest shadow or blemish.[18] It will be understood, on the one hand, how necessary are the bitter pains which the blessed souls suffer in purgatory and especially those souls that have undergone scarcely any purgation during life. On the other hand, one can understand the love and willingness with which these souls accept their suffering and the ardor with which they desire it in order to appear worthily before the majesty of God and not filled with stains and confusion. They would not be able to withstand His eternal splendor if they were not totally pure and transparent. Yet they cannot help but desire Him with a most vivid longing once His divine enchantment is to some extent manifested to them. So these souls seek purgatory as their only remedy and they look upon it as a marvelous invention

16 Cf. Mai. 3:2.

17 *Dark Night of the Soul,* II, chaps. 6-8.

18 Even when we seriously try to purify ourselves of all our faults, if, in spite of that attempt, we do not do it to such a degree that we experience even here on earth the sweetness of the friendship of God, "it is to be feared," says Monsabré *(Orac.,* V, 3), "that He will make us expiate our indolence and carelessness in a long period of waiting which entails the painful apprenticeship of longings, desires, and bitterness."

of divine love which does not wish to deprive of eternal glory the many souls that die in the state of grace without being completely purified.[19]

One can see from this what a low idea of God's infinite sanctity and purity is held by those unfortunate heretics who attribute our justification to a simple imputation of the merits of Jesus Christ, without the removal of the stains and ugliness of sin from the soul. Because of this grave error, they also deny the necessity of puratory. It is certain that nothing stained can enter heaven.[20] Accordingly, as there must be a definitive degree of union and possession of God which will determine the soul's vision and glory, so also there must be a corresponding degree of renewal and purification. If the purification is accomplished in this life, it increases the soul's merit and union through grace; and if it is voluntary, it is much milder and sweeter. But if purification is delayed until after death, it will lack merit, and since the soul's degree of union and essential perfection will not be increased, neither will its glory. As a purification imposed upon the soul, it will possess a certain mechanical aspect which will make it much more rigorous, prolonged, and intolerable. It will be

19 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chap. 7: The soul in grace which, on being separated from the body, is not yet completely purified, "sees in itself an obstacle which impedes full union with God. Realizing that the obstacle can be removed only in purgatory, it flings itself into purgatory with all the force of its will. If the soul were not to find this invention of God which is so admirably suited for the dcstroyal of the obstacle which detains it, it would experience within itself a type of hell which is much more terrible than purgatory, seeing that there is something that prevents it from being united to God, its true end."

"However great be the pains of the soul," she adds (chap. 9), "the ardor of its love for God does not permit it to take account of them. The essential suffering of these souls and their only martyrdom, in a sense, is the impediment to the will of God which they find in themselves, for they see clearly that He is inflamed with the most tender and perfect love towards them. . . . This inflames them with the fire of a reciprocal love which is so violent that they would joyfully cast themselves into a purgatory and a fire which are much more terrible if in this way they could rid themselves of the obstacle which prevents their advance towards God and union with Him."

Again, in chap. 14, she writes: "If the impossible were to happen and one of these souls which has yet a little purgatory to endure, were to be presented to the clear vision of God, the soul itself would consider it a great injury to be presented to Him in such a state. . . . Seeing that God was not as yet fully satisfied, the soul would be unwilling to frustrate the rights of divine justice.

"These souls suffer their pain with great joy and for no reason at all would they wish to be rid of the least bit of it. They know too well how much they have merited this pain and how holily it is ordained by God" (chap. 16).

20 Apoc. 11:27.

a sort of hell where the soul suffers an anguish incomparably exceeding anything we can imagine.[21]

When, as a height of contradiction, those heretics accuse us of placing all religion and justice in useless works, ignoring the interior for the exterior rather than adoring and serving God in justice and in truth, they do not stop to think of the stupendous renewal which is experienced by souls that arrive at this state nor do they realize that such souls are living a life which is truly divine. This marvel is such that sincere Protestants often recognize, in spite of everything else, the high degree of sanctity and the sublime Christian spirit which is found in the great mystics of the Catholic Church and they cannot help but admire them.

But all our admiration is nothing compared to what is owing to these generous servants of God who, determined to follow Christ in the agonies of the cross, strive to be perfectly configured to Him so that they will be entirely renewed and will have nothing to purify in the next world. Because they have corresponded with grace, or sometimes, as a singular favor, God desires to manifest Himself to these rare souls even in this life and to give them a foretaste of that which is yet to come. He infuses in them certain lights which are so superior to the light of faith that they almost seem to share in the *lumen gloriae,*[22] and He makes them endure their purgatory on earth, much to their merit and profit.[23]

21 St. Catherine of Siena, *Life,* II, chap. 6: "I saw the torments of hell and those of purgatory and there is no word which can describe them. If men had even the slightest notion of them, they would prefer to endure death a thousand times rather than suffer the lightest of those pains for a single day."

In the remarkable revelations of the Venerable Francesca of the Blessed Sacrament concerning purgatory, one sees how terribly even the smallest faults are purified, especially the faults of those whose duty it is to correct and edify. Great prelates, most observant religious, and pious laymen pass forty and sixty years being purified rigorously of faults which on earth they reckoned as nothing. . . . The extremity of these sufferings is such that one soul said to her: "One suffers more here in a single instant than he would on earth in a thousand years." Another said: "A moment of pain here is more terrible than suffering on earth until the end of the world." Yet all these souls appeared content and were overflowing with joy at finding that they were now secure and that divine justice was being fulfilled. "We do not ask any respite of God," one soul said to her. "We are content with what He sends us; we are satisfied that His will be done."

22 Cf. IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 5, ad 3; III *Sent.,* Dist. 34, q. 1, a. 1.

23 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chap. 17: "The type of purification which I see in the souls in purgatory, I feel in myself. . . . My soul dwells in my body as in a purgatory and it suffers as much pain as is possible without actually dying. My

In this state occur most of the sufferings encountered in the night of the senses: sorrows, afflictions, adversities, weaknesses, persecutions, calumnies, interior darkness, aridity, and desolation. Moreover, there are other pains, terrible beyond compare: the pains of loss which are entirely spiritual and affect not only the higher faculties, but the whole being, reaching to the very core of the soul. The sufferings of this "happy night" become so intolerable that it seems that there could never be any sufferings that are greater.[24] Nevertheless these sufferings are renewed and increased from day to day so that previous sufferings are forgotten and all past sufferings

anguish increases from day to day and it will increase continually until death liberates me. I see my spirit dispossessed of all things, even spiritual things, which might serve to strengthen it. . . . There is no power in me to take pleasure in anything. . . . God . . . separates and isolates me from everything and all the things which formerly gave me refreshment in the spiritual and bodily life, have little by little been taken from me. . . . The spirit proceeds with great energy and almost cruelty to destroy all the obstacles which are opposed to its perfection. . . . Not the slightest atom of imperfection can pass without being perceived and cast out. In regard to the exterior man . . . it has no other comfort but God Himself, who works all these things with love and mercy. . . . However much the soul has to suffer, it never desires to escape the divine disposition nor to be liberated from its prison. For nothing in the whole world would it ever consent to leave this state until full satisfaction has been made to the justice of God. All my joy consists in the fact that God is being satisfied, and I could find no torment more crueP'han to find myself outside of these divine dispositions which I look upon as being so merciful and just."

Dark Night of the Soul, II, chap. 6: "Here God greatly humbles the soul in order that afterwards He may greatly exalt it: and if He ordained not that these feelings should be quickly lulled to sleep when they arise within the soul, it would die in a very few days; but at intervals there occur times when it is not conscious of their great intensity. At times, however, they are so keen that the soul seems to be seeing hell and perdition opened. Of such are they that in truth go down alive into hell, for here on earth they are purged in the same manner as there, since this purgation is that which would have to be accomplished there. And thus the soul that passes through this either enters that place not at all, or tarries there but for a very short time; for one hour of purgation here is more profitable than are many there."

24Tauler, *Institutions,* chap, 11: "When the all-powerful God wishes to renew a soul entirely, He makes use of the most arduous and penetrating afflictions in order to purify it and make it experience a blessed and divine transformation. The heavenly Father is not wont to wash lightly the soul which He desires to enrich with His most precious gifts and in which He has determined to produce such a sublime change. Rather, He bathes it. He submerges it, and casts it into the sea of bitterness. . . . No, the trial of the chosen ones is not an ordinary trial. The sufferings which God frequently sends to them, and often when they least expect, are so undreamed of and so far surpassing ordinary sufferings, that no sufferings comparable to these could be imagined."

For this reason St. Teresa, in *The Way of Perfection* (chap. 18) and *The Interior Castle* (sixth mansions), calls these sufferings "intolerable" and says that they can be compared only to the pains of hell.

are reckoned as nothing.[25] By this suffering and capacity and the will to suffer are increased.

To better understand these most painful spiritual purgations and the loving resignation with which they are accepted, it should be noted that at the very time the soul is casting off the remnants of "the works of darkness," it is, without even adverting to it, putting on "the armor of light" in order to battle against its enemies.[26] The soul realizes clearly that it is in a state of transition in which its renewal is still incomplete. The more it possesses God and the greater proofs of His love it receives, the more it desires to possess and receive, for the food of divine wisdom always produces a greater hunger.[27] Therefore every advance in illumination inflames the soul with more vivid desires of being clothed entirely in Jesus Christ, the true Sun of justice, and of being engulfed as soon as possible in the ocean of the eternal light.

The habitual state of the servants of God who have arrived at the espousal is one of continual violence. With the Apostle [28] they groan and beg for perfect adoption, redemption from their servitude to the body, and the manifestation of the hidden glories of the sons of God.[29] They yearn unceasingly for a more stable union and a more profound transformation. Seeing in themselves the numerous obstacles that prevent them from attaining what they so ardently desire, they suffer, as it were, agonies of death and the pains of hell[30] at the same time that they already enjoy a foretaste of glory by reason of that intimate and secret union in which they

25 "When the soul is suffering a great affliction," says Ven. Sister Barbara, "it feels that it cannot make any further increase, for it seems to have reached the capacity of its suffering. But this is not so; and I speak from experience, . . . for each day the suffering is more increased. . . . God has given me to drink the dregs of this most bitter chalice and at the same time communicated a sweetness which must be experienced to be believed. It is sweet and bitter at the same time. . . . My God has hidden Himself from me and left me in a state of the greatest desolation. If I look for Him, it seems that He flees from me, as if He were angry with me. I know not where to turn my eyes, for everywhere there is darkness" (*Life,* 358-9).

28 Rom. 13:12.

27 Ecclus. 24:29.

28 Rom. 8.

28 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* Ill, 64: "The friends of the Father follow His Son. Their eyes are always on the Beloved. They walk in search of their transformation. . . . The love of God is never idle, but it impels them to follow the way of the cross."

80 Ps. 17:6: "The sorrows of hell encompassed me: and the snares of death prevented me."

arc gradually being deified.[31] Therefore in these souls is blended an insupportable suffering and an indescribable joy without the one impeding the other. The joy accompanies the possession of God and the suffering struggles to break the bonds of death, which arc obstacles to the complete union which the soul desires.[32]

The sufferings of these souls are of all kinds, but what grieves them most and the only thing that forces them to lament, is their separation from God. They see that He apparently hides Himself from them as the souls themselves draw near to Him, and they fear that they will always be deprived of His loving countenance. Thirsting for love, they sigh with ardent longings for Him who is the eternal fount of living water and they exclaim unceasingly: "When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" Their tears flow without ceasing and are a continual refreshment to them, while other creatures ask them: "Where is thy God?" [33] With such thoughts they endure the bitterness of death and at the same time in the innermost part of their spirit they rejoice, amid wonderful peace, in the infinite Good for whom they long. And no one can take this peace from them.[34]

[31] *The Living Flame,* stanza i: "But let us also now see why the soul calls this interior assault of the Holy Spirit an encounter rather than by any other name. The reason is because, as we have said, the soul in God is conscious of an infinite desire that its life may come to an end, yet, because the time of its perfecting is not yet come, this does not come to pass; and it sees that, to the end that it may be the more completely perfected and raised up above the flesh, God makes these assaults upon it that are glorious and Divine and after the manner of encounters, which, as they have the object of purifying it and bringing it out of the flesh, are indeed encounters, wherewith He penetrates the soul continually, deifying its substance and making it Divine, wherein the Being of God absorbs the soul above all being. The reason for this is that God has encountered the soul and pierced it to the quick in the Holy Spirit, Whose communications are impetuous when they are full of fervour, as is this encounter, which the soul, since it has a lively taste of God, calls sweet."

[32] St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chaps, it, 17: "Finding that the cause of its delay in union with God resides within itself, the soul suffers intolerably. . . . The soul is yet far removed from the qualities which its nature ought to attain. These qualities are made manifest in the light of grace and not being able to achieve them, though capable of possessing them, the soul endures indescribable pain which is in proportion to the esteem which the soul has for God."

[33] Ps. 41:3 f.

[34] *Dark Night,* II, 23: "It is quite true that oftentimes, when these very intimate and secret spiritual communications are present and take place in the soul, although the devil cannot get to know of what kind and manner they are, yet the great repose and silence which some of them cause in the senses and the faculties of the sensual part make it clear to him that they are taking place and that the soul is receiving a certain blessing from them. Anil then, as he sees that he cannot succeed

To attain their renewal they must yet enter into the bottomless abyss of the divine darkness where God is hidden from them. There, lost to themselves and deprived of all the comforts and helps of their natural potencies as well as that positive knowledge which they had of Him, they witness the destruction of everything that formerly gave them consolation and they suffer the horrors of absolute despoliation and total annihilation. They believe that all is lost and that they are absolutely blind and thus they enter into that most wise ignorance which surpasses all knowledge. With only one simple idea, which to all appearances is totally negative, they begin to possess the divine truth. They are sealed with the mystic Seal of the light of love. Once the eyes of their intelligence are purified during that obscure darkness, they begin to perceive the splendor of the face of God and to see His ineffable being, which is comparable to nothing else. It is the eternal light which enlightens them and dissipates all darkness.[35] "Then shall thy light rise up in darkness." [38]

in thwarting them in the depth of the soul, he does what he can to disturb and disquiet the sensual part, to which he is able to attain—now by means of afflictions, now by terrors and fears, with intent to disquiet and disturb the higher and spiritual part of the sold by this means, with respect to that blessing which it then receives and enjoys. But often, when the communication of such contemplation makes its naked assault upon the soul and exerts its strength upon it, the devil, with all his diligence, is unable to disturb it; rather the soul receives a new and greater advantage and a securer peace. For, when it feels the disturbing presence of the enemy, then—wonderous thing!—without knowing how it comes to pass, and without any efforts of its own, it enters farther into its own interior depths, feeling that it is indeed being set in a sure refuge, where it perceives itself to be most completely withdrawn and hidden from the enemy. And thus its peace and joy, which the devil is attempting to take from it, are increased; and all the fear that assails it remains without; and it becomes clearly and exultingly conscious of its secure enjoyment of that quiet peace and sweetness of the hidden Spouse, which neither the world nor the devil can give it or take from it. In that state, therefore, it realizes the truth of the words of the Bride about this, in the Songs, namely: See how threescore strong men surround the bed of Solomon, etc., because of the fears of the night."

[35] Blosius, *Speculum spirituelle,* chap. 11: "Entering upon the vast desert of the Divinity, the soul is happily lost. Enlightened with the clarity of the most brilliant darkness, it seems not to know whatever it knows and it remains in a state of wise ignorance. Though the soul does not know what God is, to whom it is united in pure charity, and though it does not see Him as He is in His glory, yet it realizes by experience that He infinitely transcends every sensible thing and everything that the soul might say of Him, write of Him, or think of Him with the human understanding. The soul realizes that to lose oneself in God is far different from percciv ing Him through images or concepts, however noble and divine they may be. Finally, through the intimate embrace and contact of love, the soul knows God better than the sun could be known through our own eyes."

[36] Isa. 58:10.

When the abyss of their own nothingness and the abyss of the infinite illness of God are brought face to face, human nothingness dies entirely to self and lives now only for its God and its all. All the elements of death and darkness, which sin had injected into the soul, are destroyed by this living death. Not being able to offer any resistance, the soul's nothingness is completely overwhelmed, inundated, and permeated with the divine All which deifies it.

This night does not properly consist, as does that of the senses, in a privation of lights. Rather it is an excess of divine light which, at the same time that it enlightens, burns, and consumes the slightest imperfection, darkens, blinds, and completely confounds the soul. It paralyzes the soul's faculties and places it in a vast darkness. Suspended, as it were, in a chaos, the soul, amid the horrors and calamities surrounding it, sees in itself nothing but the abyss of its own nothingness and the complete lack of all good. This prodigious light, which darkens the soul to all things else, discloses to it the innermost secrets of its heart and makes it know the extent of its own vileness. It shows the soul the hidden traces of crafty self-love that vitiate even the best works. It makes the soul feel keenly the innumerable defects and hidden vices which up to that time the soul did not even realize, much less root out. Seeing such an accumulation of stains and imperfections, the soul realizes that in the eyes of the infinite sanctity of God, it is absolutely impure and, even with the virtues which adorn it, is like a rag full of uncleanness.[37] When the soul sees these things and feels them so keenly, it believes that it is destined for hell for all eternity, and there is no hope for it at all. It considers itself a culprit already condemned and unworthy of pardon and mercy. From this proceed violent temptations to despair which beset the soul and cause it consternation at the same time that they purify and strengthen it.[38]

37 Isa. 64:6.

38 *Dark Night,* II, 10: "For the greater clearness of what has been said, and of what has still to be said, it is well to observe at this point that this purgative and loving knowledge or Divine light whereof we here speak acts upon the soul which is purged and prepared for perfect union with it in the same way as fire acts upon a log of wood in order to transform it into itself.

"In this same way we have to philosophize with respect to this Divine fire of contemplative love, which, before it unites and transforms the soul in itself, first purges it of all its contrary accidents. It drives out its unsightliness, and makes it black and dark, so that it seems worse than before and more unsightly and abominable than it was wont to be. For this Divine purgation is removing all the evil and vicious

The soul feels incapacitated for all that God asks of it and believes itself to be lost and beyond all remedy. Without being conscious of the fact, the soul burns with a love so pure and disinterested that what truly afflicts it in the midst of its misfortunes is the fear of offending Him who deserves infinite love and the sorrow at not being able to make the satisfaction He deserves. This secret love is changed into a cruel sword, because it manifests to the soul and makes it feel very keenly the baseness of its faults, imperfections, and evil inclinations; its incapacity for good and its propensity to evil; its paltry cooperation with the divine blessings; its bad use of graces received; the frequency with which it has resisted and grieved the Holy Ghost; and its weakness and remissness in following His inspirations. All these things afflict the soul extremely. Although the soul does not find in itself any grave sin and is firmly resolved never again to commit deliberately even the lightest fault, it believes that the greatest sinner would have made much better use of such graces

humours which the soul has never perceived because they have been so deeply rooted and grounded in it; it has never realized, in fact, that it has had so much evil within itself. But now that they are to be driven forth and annihilated, these humours reveal themselves, and become visible to the soul because it is so brightly illumined by this dark light of Divine contemplation (although it is no worse than before either in itself or in relation to God) ; and, as it sees in itself that which it saw not before, it is clear to it that it is not only unfit for God to see it, but that it deserves His abhorrence and that He does indeed abhor it.

"This enkindling of love, however, is not always felt by the soul, but only at times when contemplation assails it less vehemently, for then it has occasion to see, and even to enjoy, the work which is being wrought in it, and which is then revealed to it. For it seems that the worker takes his hand from the work, and draws the iron out of the furnace, in order that something of the work which is being done may be seen; and then there is occasion for the soul to observe in itself the good which it saw not while the work was going on.

"After each of these periods of relief the soul suffers once again, more intensely and keenly than before. For after that revelation just referred to has been made, and after the more outward imperfections of the soul have been purified, the fire of love once again attacks that which is to be consumed and purified more inwardly."

Vallgornera, *Mystica Theologia,* q.j, disp. 6, a. i: "The matter or subject of the passive purification of the spirit is the superior part of the soul in which the two potencies, intellect and will, are located, for it is to these that the purgation of the spirit pertains. The formal cause is a blinding light which penetrates the very center of the soul, makes manifest its hidden crevices, bares its disguised defects, and makes known, on the one hand, the goodness and grandeur of Him whom it has offended and, on the other hand, the soul's own baseness and malice. It fills the soul with confusion and sorrow and reduces it to a state akin to desperation. The efficient cause of this purgation is God Himself who thus mercifully disposes the soul for union with Himself. The final cause is union with God."

anil that a tree as sterile as itself is good for nothing but the fire. It seems that it is already condemned. It cannot be comforted even with the most prudent advice offered by its director, for it thinks he does not understand and cannot understand. The soul thus judges cither because this labyrinth is too complicated or because the soul, owing to the obscurity in which it finds itself, cannot explain it or, finally, because it fears that it will deliberately deceive the director in spite of its sincerity. The soul gains no comfort from hearing or reading the lives of the saints who found themselves in similar straits, for, although this gives a certain interior security, the soul begins to suspect that its own case is quite different. Actually it is not nor can it be exactly the same, because each soul must be tested in its own way, and the Holy Ghost, who breathes and works where He will, never repeats Himself in effecting these prodigious marvels of love.[39]

As a crowning point of its sorrow and the greatest test of its fidelity, God makes the soul oblivious to all the favors it has received and even to those favors it received but a few moments earlier. Sometimes He makes the soul consider those things an illusion or

[39] *Dark Night,* II, 7: "There is added to all this (because of the solitude and abandonment caused in it by this dark night), the fact that it finds no consolation or support in any instruction nor in a spiritual master. For, although in many ways its director may show it good cause for being comforted in the blessings which are contained in these afflictions, it cannot believe him. For it is so greatly absorbed and immersed in the realization of those evils wherein it sees its own miseries so clearly, that it thinks that, as its director observes not that which it sees and feels, he is speaking in this manner because he understands it not; and so, instead of comfort, it rather receives fresh affliction, since it believes that its director's advice contains no remedy for its troubles. And, in truth, this is so; for, until the Lord shall have completely purged it after the manner that He wills, no means or remedy is of any service or profit for the relief of its affliction; the more so because the soul is as powerless in this case as one who has been imprisoned in a dark dungeon, and is bound hand and foot, and can neither move nor see, nor feel any favour whether from above or from below, until the spirit is humbled, softened and purified, and grows so keen and delicate and pure that it can become one with the Spirit of God, according to the degree of union of love which His mercy is pleased to grant it; in proportion to this the purgation is of greater or less severity and of greater or less duration.

"But, if it is to be really effectual, it will last for some years, however severe it be; since the purgative process allows intervals of relief, wherein, by the dispensation of God, this dark contemplation ceases to assail the soul in the form and manner of purgation, and assails it after an illuminative and loving manner, wherein the soul, like one that has gone forth from this dungeon and imprisonment, and is brought into the recreation of spaciousness and liberty, feels and experiences great sweetness of peace and loving friendship with God, together with ready abundance of spiritual communication."

dream, until He disengages it and then He encourages it with other more evident favors which both confuse and humble the soul. During this time the soul finds itself in the midst of the saddest and most painful anxiety. Seeing itself so violently wrenched from its peaceful condition, the soul appears, in the words of the prophet of the lamentations,[40] to have forgotten all good things and it feels that it can never more recover them.[41] The soul's inability to realize its ardent desires to improve its life makes it consider itself a maze of contradictions. It wishes to be holy, but it is filled with infinite malice, so inclined to evil and incapacitated for any good does it find itself! [42]

40 Lam. 3:17.

41 "While I endured that interior waiting for my divine Spouse," says Ven. Mary of the Incarnation (*Life,* I, chap. 4), "it seemed as if I had suddenly been cast into an abyss. I was deprived of all consolation and the very recollection of graces received increased my pains. It seemed to me that up to that time I had been a victim of illusions. . . . Even the advice of the confessor caused me a sort of martyrdom. . . . What most augmented my affliction was the fact that I no longer seemed to love God. I found myself full of miseries and imperfections . . . and at the sight of the change which had been effected in me, my heart experienced the most extraordinary sorrows. . . . Yet my will remained submissive."

Dark Night of the Soul, II, 6: "But what the sorrowful soul feels most in this condition is its clear perception, as it thinks, that God has abandoned it, and, in His abhorrence of it, has flung it into darkness; it is a grave and piteous grief for it to believe that God has forsaken it. . . . For indeed, when this purgative contemplation is most severe, the soul feels very keenly the shadow of death and the lamentations of death and the pains of hell, which consist in its feeling itself to be without God, and chastised and cast out, and unworthy of Him; and it feels that He is wroth with it. All this is felt by the soul in this condition—yea, and more, for it believes that it is so with it forever. It feels, too, that all creatures have forsaken it, and that it is condemned by them, particularly by its friends. Wherefore David presently continues, saying: Thou hast put far from me my friends and acquaintances; they have counted me an abomination (Ps. 87:9)."

42 *Dark Night of the Soul,* II, 8 f.: "It is God Who is passively working here in the soul; wherefore the soul can do nothing. Hence it can neither pray nor be present at the Divine offices and pay attention to them, much less can it attend to other' things and affairs which are temporal. Not only so, but it has likewise such distractions and times of such profound forgetfulness of the memory, that frequent periods pass by without its knowing what it has been doing or thinking, or what it is that it is doing or is going to do, neither can it pay attention, although it desire to do so, to anything that occupies it.

"Inasmuch as not only is the understanding here purged of its light, and the will of its affections, but the memory is also purged of meditation and knowledge, it is well that it be likewise annihilated with respect to all these things, so that that which David says of himself in this purgation may be fulfilled, namely: I was annihilated and I knew not (lxxii, 22). . . . Now this is a thing that seems incredible, to say that, the brighter and purer is supernatural and Divine light, the more it darkens the soul, and that, the less bright and pure is it, the less dark it is to the soul. . . . Now this is precisely what this Divine ray of contemplation does in the soul. Assailing it with its Divine light, it transcends the natural power of the soul, and herein it darkens it and deprives it of all natural affections and apprehensions

Yet this is not the soul's greatest torment. For without realizing it and even supposing the contrary, the soul still loves God truly and incomparably more than it loves itself. Its greatest torment lies in ever having displeased Him and believing that it still offends Him, however much it tries to resist the temptations with which the enemies assail it. The soul deems that it has not loved God as much as it could have done and it believes that it does not love Him now and that it will never be able to love Him or to atone for its faults. Therefore, although it seems to the soul that God is justly indignant with it, in the midst of its affliction and mortal agony it cries out with a pure and even heroic love: "Lord, I deserve hell, but even there let me love Thee as Thou dost deserve to be loved, that I may not blaspheme Thy holy name and that my pains may in some measure atone for my lack of love!"

If the soul could always burst forth in such affections, it would be of no small comfort. But it is so oppressed and its faculties are so bound and reduced to impotency that it finds not the slightest alleviation, support, or consolation. As St. John of the Cross says:

The darkness which the soul here describes relates, as we have said, to the desires and faculties, sensual, interior and spiritual, for all these are darkened in this night as to their natural light, so that, being purged in this respect, they may be illumined with respect to the supernatural. For the spiritual and the sensual desires are put to sleep and mortified so that they can experience nothing, either Divine or human; the affections of the soul are oppressed and constrained so that they can neither move nor find support in anything; the imagination is bound and can make no useful reflection; the memory is gone; the understanding is in darkness, unable to understand anything; and hence the soul likewise is arid and constrained and all the faculties are void and useless; and in addition to

which it apprehended aforetime by means of natural light; and thus it leaves it not only dark, but likewise empty, according to its faculties and desires, both spiritual and natural. And, by thus leaving it empty and in darkness, it purges and illumines it with Divine spiritual light even when the soul thinks not that it has this light, but believes itself to be in darkness.

"It now remains to be said that, although this happy night brings darkness to the spirit, it does so only to give it light in everything; and that, although it humbles it and makes it miserable, it does so only to exalt it and to raise it up; and, although it impoverishes it and empties it of all natural affection and attachment, it does so only that it may enable it to stretch forward, divinely, and thus to have fruition and experience of all things, both above and below, yet to preserve its unrestricted liberty of spirit in them all." See also Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom*, chap. 13.

all this a thick and heavy cloud is upon the soul, keeping it in affliction, and, as it were, far away from God.[43]

In another place (*ibid.*, II, 6) the saint writes:

All this God brings to pass by means of this dark contemplation; wherein the soul not only suffers this emptiness and the suspension of these natural supports and apprehensions, which is a most afflictive suffering (as if a man were suspended or held in the air so that he could not breathe), but likewise He is purging the soul, annihilating it, emptying it or consuming in it (even as fire consumes the mouldiness and the rust of metal) all the affections and imperfect habits which it has contracted in its whole life. . . . Herein is understood the pain which is suffered in the emptiness and poverty of the substance of the soul both in sense and spirit. . . . Here God greatly humbles the soul in order that He may afterwards greatly exalt it; and if He ordained not that these feelings should be quickly lulled to sleep when they arise within the soul, it would die in a very few days.[44]

The soul must resign itself to the will of the Father amid this terrible abandonment, striving to be faithful, trusting in Him, and adjusting itself to live in this new manner, with a simple intuition which is tranquil and unchanging, as intense as it is imperceptible, and with a similar type of love.[45] The poor soul does not realize that

[43] *Dark Night,* II, 16.

[44] *Ibid.*, II, 6.

Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 12: "These spiritual persons sometimes experience so great an interior poverty that there is no temporal death so terrible that they would not accept it in place of it, if it were pleasing to God. Truly, that interior affliction consumes even the very substance of their bones. Great indeed is their work when, suspended or, as it were, hanging from a gibbet, they gradually wither up and, though living, suffer the acute pains of death. There is no creature in time or in eternity that can console them. Rather, suspended between time and eternity, it is necessary that they be suffocated and oppressed until the merciful God relieves them. Created things are unable to alleviate the suffering of such souls; rather, they are an added weight to them. . . . In this condition, one can see who is the servant and who is the son, for when adversity presses, the slave runs away but the son remains with his father in prosperity and in adversity . . . although the father may be vexed at the son."

[45] Blosius, *Institutio spiritualis,* appendix, chap. 1: "He who experiences these trials should not seek vain consolations but should be faithful to the Spouse. He should work manfully, conduct himself rightly, and be confident that God will help him and that all will work out well. . . . This resignation greatly surpasses all other resignation and to abandon a thousand worlds would be as nothing when compared to it. Even the act of the holy martyrs in giving their lives for God is a small thing when compared with this abandonment, for the martyrs, filled with divine consolations, looked upon the greatest pains as mere play and joyfully went to death."

what it considers slothfulness is the culmination of activity and that the soul is now more attentive than ever to God and more desirous of pleasing Him. With what great reason could the soul say with the prophet Isaias: "My soul hath desired Thee in the night: yea, and with my spirit within me in the morning early I will watch to Thee." [48] But the soul takes no account of these loving desires and for that reason it laments its misfortune with great sorrow and bemoans its incapacity, its abandonment, and the sad state into which it supposes itself to have fallen. It believes that it has lost God forever and it seeks Him with agonizing sighs which tear at its heart. Though actually aflame with His love, the soul, believing itself to be cold and empty, begs a little spark of that heavenly fire.

If the soul knew that its trials came from the hands of God, this knowledge would be a great comfort and it would accept them with resignation. But it believes that it is forgotten by God and abandoned to the enemy who cruelly torments and persecutes it. While it suffers and languishes out of pure love, it unconsciously experiences the salutary effects of the hidden divine fire which renews it and the terrible astringent which cleanses and purifies it. Ultimately the soul realizes that in those bitter medicines it acquires full health which can be found only in true humility and purity. In that death of love is found the beginning of unending life.

In this way the soul is enabled to rise to the most sublime heights of contemplation and to see God in the prodigious summit of the great divine darkness wherein it sees the uncreated light and hears the secret word of the Father. This living word of God, more sharp and penetrating than a two-edged sword, produces a kind of cleavage between the soul and the body, between the sensible and the

This pain could not be endured if the soul did not unite itself totally with Jesus Christ abandoned on the cross and deliver itself with Him into the hands of the Father in order to be strengthened by Him.

"I saw Him there," says Catherine Emmerich (*Passion,* 44), "alone and without consolation. He suffered everything that an afflicted man could suffer, filled with anguish and deprived of all human and divine aid. . . . This sorrow cannot be expressed. There it was that Jesus obtained for us the power to withstand the greatest terrors of abandonment. When all the attachments which bind us to this earthly life are broken and the awareness of another life is darkened and extinguished, we cannot come forth victorious from this trial except by uniting our abandonment to the merits of Him on the cross."

48 Isa. 26:9.

rational parts, thus causing the terrible mystical death. Later, in the mystical burial, it causes another division even more profound between the soul and the spirit. The spirit is henceforth engulfed in the divinity to enjoy a perpetual peace while the soul continues to suffer horribly.[47] It seems to the soul that it is deprived forever of its God and it suffers a total destruction amid the most profound grief.

That the soul may not lose life entirely because of such terrible sufferings, the Lord sometimes deigns to comfort the body while He burns and afflicts the soul or He refreshes the soul with sweet consolations while the body is oppressed with sorrows and infirmities. Yet the greatest suffering of all consists in the fact that the soul does not realize that it is God Himself who cauterizes it. If the soul but realized this, then that suffering would be received from His hand as the greatest glory. Amid this painful anxiety and these horrors of an apparent abandonment, the mystical work of the soul's renewal and transformation is gradually consummated.[48]

After manifesting to the soul all its baseness and imperfections, that admirable divine light discloses to the soul in the mysterious darkness the infinite Good, which far surpasses everything that is knowable or desirable and rejects and destroys everything that the soul has ever desired or known. That negative vision, which far surpasses any positive ideas which one could form of it, leaves the soul astonished and humbled, at the same time that it arouses in it

47 By "spirit" is meant the highest part of the soul, the supreme essence or center of the soul, which is the proper dwelling place of God when He inhabits the soul through sanctifying grace. Scholastic philosophy also distinguishes between soul and spirit. So far as it informs, it is called soul; regarded in its superior faculties, it is called spirit. Applying this distinction to Christ, one can better understand how He could see the divine essence and yet suffer a true agony, being sorrowful unto death. See appendix at the end of this section concerning the mystical cleavage of the soul and the spirit. [Tr.]

48 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* II, 10: "If God had made it known that He Himself was the author of these dark trials, there is no doubt that the soul would have submitted to them with all docility. But God remained hidden and in this way did He complete His holy work. The body, weak and panting, was the victim of successive sorrows which were continually increased. . . . I would not have been able to sustain them if the oppression of the soul had been added to it. Fortunately the soul was refreshed by mystical ecstasies. . . . O great prodigy which I can never forget! When God rigorously afflicted the body, He would fortify the soul with consolations; and when He would martyr the soul as an avenging God, He would refresh the body. This condition lasted for ten years, and during all this time I had to endure, without realizing it, the supernatural operations of which I was the object. . . . The sanctity of God can find stains even in His angels" (Job 4).

a mortal eagerness to possess such a Good. But this Good as yet appears excessively lofty and too elevated for the soul to attain. Seeing at the same time its own baseness, it exclaims with St. Catherine of Siena: "Thou art the absolute Being; I am nothing. Thou art pure Goodness; I am malice itself. Thou art all perfection; I am the culmination of all imperfections and miseries." In this absolute contraposition, the soul believes it impossible that such contrary extremes can ever be united and associated with each other. It finds within itself a horrible contradiction to the supreme Good and, being unable to rid itself of all the things that are opposed to this Goodness, it suffers agonies worse than death and exclaims with Job: [49] "Why hast Thou set me opposite to Thee?" But in spite of this, the attraction of such Goodness captivates the soul, melts and consumes it in unspeakable delights while the apparent separation makes it suffer the horrors of hell itself. Thereby the horrible contradiction is somewhat dissipated, and the eyes of the soul are enlightened to see the divine glory more clearly and at closer range.

In the measure that the Lord begins to manifest Himself with His infinite enchantments during that darkness, shedding rays of light which reveal more and more the eternal and incomprehensible splendor of His infinite glory, the soul is gradually renewed and transformed in the midst of the most contradictory affections. At the sight of such majesty, grandeur, beauty, and goodness, the soul is thrown into ecstasy. Yet these very delights are so painful that there is no other pain comparable to them. The soul's ardent flights of love inflame and pulverize it while they destroy all its impurities and imperfections. They cause an ineffable pleasure which kills and an unbearable pain which vivifies. Although the soul is unable to endure this pain, it does not wish to be deprived of it. It sees that the lovable Good, at sight of whom it swoons in ecstasy, manifests Himself as if He were forever to be inaccessible and unattainable. So the poor little soul thinks that it will never be able to reach Him. This delicious pain is the greatest that can befall any soul. Elevated above itself and raised above all created things, the soul is unable to find any support in anything. It feels as if it were suspended in emptiness and were enduring the continual agony of death. Creatures fill it with horror, and yet it feels repulsed by the

[49] Job 7:20.

uncreated Good for whom it longs with the most ardent yearnings. It finds itself in a desolation which is extreme and an abandonment which is most terrible. Still, even in the midst of such a martyrdom, it enjoys an indescribable peace.

At the same time, says St. John of the Cross, the abyss of the divine majesty and grandeur discloses another abyss, that of the soul's poverty and misery. This is one of the greatest torments of this purgation, for both the senses and the spirit are oppressed and humbled beneath a great and invisible weight and they suffer such a cruel agony that, if the soul were able to make a choice, it would prefer death to such a state. Even the most painful death imaginable would be accepted as a relief. Sometimes this agony endures not only for days, but for months and even years, until the soul, totally purified, is strengthened with virtue from on high to receive without pain the torrents of the divine light. Then the soul will see, with great surprise, that the sovereign Good which formerly it had deemed impossible of attainment, is now very close to the soul and that He fills it, satiates it, vivifies it, and divinizes it, being united to it so intimately that the soul is certain it can never lose Elim. Then the soul cries out in the midst of its heavenly joy: "I have at last found Him whom my soul loveth. I hold Him, and I will not let Him go." [50]

But first the soul must be engulfed in the mysterious darkness in which He is hidden. It must mount and surpass all things on the wings of the Spirit, beyond all things imaginable, all things knowable, all things created, all things that are conditioned. In a bold contemplation, the soul must be raised above all the vicissitudes of time. It must become totally blind, deprived of all the natural lights it formerly possessed, with only the obscure and subtle light of faith by which it is able to peer into the serene regions of eternity, receive the rays of the uncreated light, discover the unknowable, the eternal, the absolute, and see in a simple gaze at the necessary and infinite Being, the eternal reasons of all contingencies, changes, and limitations. It must, finally, be utterly oblivious to all creatures, that it may be able to see the Creator in that indescribable abyss of the great darkness wherein are concealed the sacrosanct mysteries which are buried in His bosom from all eternity.

[50] Cant. 3:4.

When the soul is introduced to that state through the powerful influence of the Spirit who searches the most profound things of God, when it is submerged in that bottomless ocean of light and of beauties which are unknown and unsounded by any mortal, it swoons away, is absorbed and annihilated. It forgets all things and, losing itself, it finds all goods in one as well as all the delights and knowledge which it could ever desire. It finds its God and its all, the God of its heart who is its portion forever and, with the wise foolishness which such a sight produces, it understands in one moment the whole science of salvation.

In that divine darkness, whose enlightenment increases in proportion to its apparent obscurity, the wonderful grandeurs of the hidden God are manifested to the soul by degrees and it continually receives the most pleasing and indescribable surprises. In that state God Himself gradually reveals His marvelous attributes, making the soul see at each moment new and inconceivable enchantments. There, finally, He discloses to the soul the bottomless abyss of His incomprehensible essence where it seems that nothing is seen and at the same time everything is seen. There, between the two abysses of His all-ness and the soul's nothingness, the soul finds its glory and its delight. Reduced to an inability of loving and knowing as much as it desires, struggling, so to speak, in that ocean of light and of fire into which it has been thrust, the soul succeeds, in one supreme enlightenment, in discovering the enchantment of all divine enchantments: the august mystery of the Trinity of persons in the absolute unity of nature.[51] Then the transformation of the soul in God is completed and the soul is able to celebrate that eternal divine marriage in which the creature is made forever one with the Creator.

In the whole series of operations which the Holy Spirit performs in the soul during the blessed night in order to effect the change from the conforming to the transforming union, two extremes which seem opposed to each other in the highest degree are joined together: the suffering of hell and the delight of an anticipated

[51] Godinez, *Mist.*, VI, 12: "When the soul sees the divine attributes of omnipotence, mercy, and justice, its love of admiration increases, but when it arrives at the royal closet of the divine essence, where it sees the distinction of persons in the unity of nature, its admiration increases even more. The soul is rendered mute and, being speechless, it must speak with ciphers and symbols of love. It speaks with a language of fire which only the seraphim understand."

heaven. Not only are trying afflictions intermingled with certain sweet consolations which gladden and give joy to the soul in the multitude of its sorrows,[52] but even in the midst of its pains and tribulations, the soul is secretly overflowing with joy.[53] This joy is so preponderant that, although the soul is experiencing affliction with the most profound pain, it is as if there were no pain. Rather it experiences an insatiable hunger for greater suffering in order to be more and more configured with Christ; to die with Him and with Him to resurrect each day to a new grade of glorious life.[54] Since such souls know very well how valuable is one more degree of grace, they would consider well spent all the labors of the world in order to obtain the slightest growth in God.

In this way, slowly and almost without being aware of it, the soul realizes in itself a marvelous renewal and transformation which are true prodigies of divine Wisdom. That which no one could ever have imagined and which every created intelligence would have deemed impossible (an intimate, familiar, and vital fellowship and an ineffable transforming union of the finite with the Infinite) is made possible by the good God. When the soul least expects it, it finds itself totally renewed, rectified, reformed, revivified, transformed, and divinized. Its stains and imperfections have disappeared like straws or drops of water in a flaming furnace and, with the disappearance of these obstacles, the divine Being who had seemed so inaccessible invades the soul, absorbs it, and assimilates it to Himself, making it one with Himself.

Now the soul realizes that it is no longer what it was. It has become all light and fire and is filled with divine truth, virtue, and strength. It is no longer the soul that lives, but God lives in it. Lost and utterly absorbed in the ocean of divinity, the soul seems to have lost its own proper being, its nature, and even its personality, for it is now totally renewed and despoiled of the "old man." The old "ego" which caused conflict in all things, that selfish "I" which gave

82 Ps. 93:19.

83II Cor. 7:4.

84 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 64: "The moment that the soul receives the vision, it is aroused and absorbed in a great desire to complete its union It is uncreated Love who works in the soul. He it is who prompts it to retire from every creature in order to increase this intimate union. . . . The love of God it never inactive; it impels the soul to follow truly the way of the Cross."

the soul so much trouble and cost it so much effort, is no longer evident. "Thou shalt seek his place, and shalt not find it." "[5] There is now in the soul no other interest but the divine interest.

Yet the soul knows well that it has maintained its responsible personality and its own natural being, although they are renewed and transformed. Far from being made proud by this grandeur and these divine lights, the soul fully realizes its own nothingness and the fact that all the good which it possesses is due to the infinite largess and mercy of God who has deigned to deify it and make it one with Himself. The soul well knows that it is not God, because not long ago it had been a child of wrath, but on receiving the full communication of the Spirit of adoption, the soul sees that it is now deified with God. Such is the ideal which is realized in this marvelous evolution which all Christian souls are able to experience in this life. O progress truly divine which thus leads to deification!

By means of these things, nature itself, which is so mortified, is far from being destroyed amid the violence it had to endure and suffer. Rather it is rectified, renewed, and revivified. It has lost none of its own perfections, but these same perfections now shine forth with a divine splendor. No man is so much a man as he who has arrived at this full union with God for, according to St. Augustine, "there are no more perfect men than there are true sons of God." The activities of these generous imitators of Christ are of great use to the millions of the ordinary faithful. Though they may appear useless to the world, they exercise an influence which is both prodigious and profitable. One saint is sometimes enough to reform a religious institute or even an entire nation.

The noble delicacy of the sentiments of such souls has no comparison. Their nature, once it has been renewed and perfected to the point of obtaining a marvelous power, is enriched and transfigured by certain rays of that hidden glory which, when fully manifest, will appear like to that of God Himself. Such a nature is proper to the sons of God who have been configured with the image of His only-begotten Son, of whose plentitude they have received in abundance. As a result they, like Him, are full of grace and truth.

[5] Ps. 36:10.

APPENDIX

i. Various Works Which Precede the Betrothal

St. Teresa *(Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap, i) remarks:

The soul is now completely determined to take no other spouse; but the Spouse disregards its yearnings for the conclusion of the Betrothal, desiring that they should become still deeper and that this greatest of all blessings should be won by the soul at some cost to itself. And although everything is of but slight importance by comparison with the greatness of this gain, I assure you, daughters, that, if the soul is to bear its trials, it has no less need of the sign and token of this gain which it now holds. Oh, my God, how great are these trials, which the soul will suffer, both within and without, before it enters the seventh Mansion! Really, when I think of them, I am sometimes afraid that, if we realized their intensity beforehand, it would be most difficult for us, naturally weak as we are, to muster determination enough to enable us to suffer them or resolution enough for enduring them. . . . I think it will be well if I tell you about some of the things which I know are certain to happen here. Not all souls, perhaps, will be led along this path, though I doubt very much if souls which from time to time really taste the things of Heaven can live in freedom from earthly trials, in one way or in another.

Although I had not intended to treat of this, it has occurred to me that some soul finding itself in this state might be very much comforted if it knew what happens to those whom God grants such favours, at a time when everything really seems to be lost. I shall not take these experiences in the order in which they happen, but as each one presents itself to my memory. I will begin with the least of them. An outcry is made by people with whom such a person is acquainted, and even by those with whom she is not acquainted and who she never in her life supposed would think about her at all. "How holy she's getting!" they exclaim, or "She's only going to these extremes to deceive the world and to make other people look sinful, when really they are better Christians than she is without any of these goings-on!" (Notice, by the way, that she is not really indulging in any "goings-on" at all: she is only trying to live up to her profession.) Then people whom she had thought her friends abandon her and it is they who say the worst things of all and express the deepest regret that (as they put it) she is "going to perdition" and "obviously being deluded," and "this is the devil's work," that "she's going the way of So

and-so and So-and-so, who ruined their own lives and dragged good people down with them," and that "she takes in all her confessors." And they actually go to her confessors and tell them so, illustrating what they say by stories of some who ruined their lives in this way: and they scoff at the poor creature and talk about her like this times without number.

The worst of it is, these things are not soon over—they last all one's life long. . . . You will tell me that there are also those who speak well of one. But oh, daughters, how few there are who believe the good things they say by comparison with the many who dislike us! In any case, to be well spoken of is only one trial more and a worse one than those already mentioned. For the soul sees quite clearly that if there is any good in it this is a gift of God, and not in the least due to itself, for only a short time previously it saw itself in dire poverty and plunged deep into sin. So this praise is an intolerable torment to it, at least at the beginning: afterwards it is less so, and this for various reasons. The first of these is that experience shows it clearly how people will speak well of others as readily as ill, and so it takes no more notice of the former class than of the latter. The second, that the Lord has given it greater light and shown it that anything good it may have does not come from itself, but is Flis Majesty's gift; so it breaks into praises of God, but as though He were being gracious to a third person, and forgetting that it is itself concerned at all. The third reason is that, having seen others helped by observing the favours which God is granting it, the soul thinks that His Majesty has been pleased for them to think of it as good, though in fact it is not, so that they may be profited. The fourth is that, as the soul now prizes the honour and glory of God more than its own honour and glory, it no longer suffers from a temptation which beset it as first—namely, to think that these praises will do it harm, as it has seen them do to others. It cares little about being dishonoured itself, provided that it can be the cause of God's being even once praised—come afterwards what may.

The Lord is also in the habit of sending the most grievous infirmities. This is a much greater trial, especially if the pains are severe; in some ways, when they are very acute, I think they are the greatest earthly trial that exists—the greatest of exterior trials, I mean—however many a soul may suffer: I repeat that it is only to very acute pains that I am referring. For they affect the soul both outwardly and inwardly, till it becomes so much oppressed as not to know what to do with itself, and would much rather suffer any martyrdom than these pains. Still, at the very worst, they do not last so long—no longer as a rule, than other bad illnesses do. For, after all, God gives us no more than we can bear, and He gives patience first.

But oh, when we com: to interior sufferings! If these could be described they would make all physical sufferings seem very slight, but it is impossible to describe interior sufferings and how they happen.

Let us begin with the torture which it costs us to have to do with a confessor so scrupulous and inexperienced that he thinks nothing safe: he is afraid of everything, and doubtful about everything, as soon as he sees that he is dealing with anything out of the ordinary. This is particularly so if he sees any imperfection in the soul that is undergoing these experiences. Fie thinks that people to whom God grants these favours must be angels; and, as this is impossible while they are in the body, he attributes the whole thing to melancholy or to the devil. . . . But, when the poor soul, harassed by the same fear, goes to the confessor as to a judge, and he condemns her, she cannot fail to be upset and tortured by what he says—and only a person who has passed through such a trial will know how great it is. . . . When the confessor reassures the soul, it becomes calm, though in due course it gets troubled again; but when all he can do is to make it still more fearful the thing grows almost intolerable, especially when on top of everything else come periods of aridity, during which the soul feels as if it has never known God and never will know Him.

All this would be nothing to the person concerned were it not followed immediately by the thought that she cannot be describing her case properly to her confessor and has been deceiving him; and, although when she thinks about it she feels sure she has not kept back even the first movement of her mind, it is of no use. For her understanding is so dim that it is incapable of seeing the truth, but believes what the imagination (now-mistress of the understanding) presents to it and the nonsense which the devil attempts to present to it, when Our Lord gives him leave to test her soul, and even to make her think herself cast off by God. For there are many things which assault her soul with an interior oppression so keenly felt and so intolerable that I do not know to what it can be compared, save to the torment of those who suffer in hell, for in this spiritual tempest no consolation is possible.

If she decides to take up the matter with her confessor, it would look as if the devils have come to his aid so that he may torture her soul the more.

Briefly, in this tempest, there is no help for it but to wait upon the mercy of God, Who suddenly, at the most unlooked-for hour, with a single word, or on some chance occasion, lifts the whole of this burden from the soul, so that it seems as if it has never been clouded over, but is full of sunshine and far happier than it was before.

2. Terrible Sufferings and Temptations of This State

The following is the testimony of Blessed Angela of Foligno (*Visions,* chap. 19):

Countless torments tear at my body. They are caused by the demons who afflict me in a thousand ways. . . . There is not a single member of my body which does not suffer horribly . . . and the torments of the soul are yet more terrible and beyond all comparison. . . . I can compare myself only to a man who hangs from the gallows, his hands tied behind his back and his eyes blindfolded, without any protection, without any remedy, and without any aid. What I suffer at the hands of the demons is still more cruel and desperate. . . . I am in the power of a multitude of demons who arouse in me all the vices which I formerly possessed and produce others which I never had before. . . . The vices that I thought were dead in my soul, revive now in my body. . . . I moan, I cry for death, any kind of death. . . . My soul is deprived of the use of its faculties and, although it does not consent to these vices, it is powerless to overcome them. . . . I see nothing but defects in both my soul and my body. God is buried within me, and His power and grace are hidden from me. . . . Seeing that I am condemned, I am not disturbed by the condemnation itself; I am disturbed only at my many crimes. . . . I am certain that no one else in the whole world is more deserving of hell. All the graces and favors from God but serve to increase my despair and martyrdom. . . . The goods which God has bestowed on me are changed within my soul into an infinite bitterness. . . . Though all the wise men of the world and all the saints of heaven were to shower me with consolation and assurances and though God Himself were to pour forth His gifts upon me, if I do not change and become reformed, then instead of comforting me, the wise men and saints and God Himself will immeasurably aggravate my despair, my frenzy, my sadness, my sorrow, and my blindness. . . . Ah, could I but exchange these tortures for all the evils of the world! I would deem these latter far more light and bearable. . . . Many times have I begged that my torments be exchanged for any kind of martyrdom. . . . Now I understand that the soul, crushed between false humility and pride, suffers an immense purgation through which it acquires true humility, without which there can be no salvation. . . . By a knowledge of its own emptiness and imperfections which is acquired through true humility, the soul is purged of pride and all demons. The more it is afflicted, despoiled, and deeply humbled, the more it gains in purity and the aptitude for attaining the heights. The elevation

of which the soul is capable is measured by the profundity of the abyss in which it has struck its roots and made its foundation.

St. Catherine of Genoa (*Dialogues,* II, 2) exclaims:

How cruel is this operation of the divine Spirit! I seem to be abandoned in a fiery furnace wherein I cannot live, nor can I die! . . . My God! Thou dost close my mouth so that I cannot lament. My interior, suffering this terrible trial, is in the hand of Thy counsel (Tob. 3) and at the mercy of Thy will, which is neither known nor comprehended by my soul but its effects are manifested in the fulfillment of Thy designs. . . . For my part, I must suffer in silence the things that Thou dost send me. Ah, if I could but express a cry of desolation! This would be to me a delicious refreshment. But Thou dost not grant this to me, O Lord, and once more Thy will, not mine, is done (Matt. 24).

This purgatory which I suffered on earth was at once horrible and sweet. It was sweet in comparison with the purgatory of the other life and yet it was so rigorous that it caused both the body and the soul an intolerable martyrdom. But that which appears as cruelty to us in our blindness, is in reality a great mercy of God which afflicts us in order to liberate us and castigates us in order to crown us . . . and after our tears and sighs it fills us with joy (Tob. 3). Therefore the enlightened man recognizes that all the divine works have love as their beginning and their end. . . . Oh, how much better it is to pass through one's puragtory here than in the other life! . . . But it is necessary to accept the purgation in this life with generosity, for God does not impose it on us unless we, corresponding with His grace, accept it freely. . . . How wonderful are the workings of the Lord! He shows the will what He desires of it and, once full consent is given, the divine decree binds the soul and enchains it with a tie that cannot be broken.

3. The Marvelous Admixture of Sorrows and Consolations

God hides Himself so that we may feel only the weight of His hand by which He cures our wounds while He makes us break forth in lamentations.[56] Yet He mercifully modulates His activity in such

[56] "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me" (Job 19:21). St. John of the Cross comments on this passage by saying: "A thing of great wonder and pity is it that the soul's weakness and impurity should now be so great that, though the hand of God is of itself so light and gentle, the soul should now feel it to be so heavy and so contrary, though it neither weighs it down nor rests upon it, but only touches it, and that mercifully,

a way that, when He afflicts the soul, He refreshes the body; and when the body is oppressed with sorrows, the soul is inundated with ineffable joy.[57]

A certain soul who found herself in this condition, wrote as follows to her director:

Such terrible tribulations came over me that I thought I would die. . . . Through God's mercy my spirit was strong and my interior joy increased in proportion to my suffering. . . . My body was weak and heavily burdened, but my soul was serene and contented, filled with the desire to suffer more and more for my Beloved. Repeatedly I made acts of abandonment and love to that Lover who, amid such sorrows and afflictions, caressed me delightfully and poured forth such consolations upon me that I am unable to explain them. See how happy I am in the midst of these two worlds in which I seem to dwell. Outwardly I experience countless struggles and am engaged in multiple activities, . . . but inwardly I experience loving communications with my God which annihilate and consume me. What strange thing is this that I live without living and without being aware of my own actions? I should like to explain this condition of my soul, but I cannot find the phrases nor can I form any ideas of it. To say . . . that it produces the most horrible suffering and terminates in the most wonderful consolation and happiness seems foolishness, but it is so certain, Father, that one doubts whether there was any sorrow at all, because of the delight of tasting it, and one desires to suffer not only that torment, but.all the most terrible torments, because this produces a burning thirst for love and an insatiable suffering. Everything happens with such sweetness, such peace, and such total abandonment!

What lofty perfection the Lord inspires me to undertake, and how confused I find myself at the sight of my own miseries! I believe that I would despair if this feeling were not interspersed with interior assurances from the ineffable One during those moments in which my soul loses itself in the great charity of love. . . . I believe that what most unites one to God is the embrace of His Cross with a pure love of suffering, without tasting any consolations whatever. True love seeks no return. It is necessary not to seek oneself in anything, but to live for Him alone. . . . This, to my mind, is the great secret of the soul's being filled with ardent joy and the desire to suffer more, if God so wills, even when

since He does this in order to grant the soul favors and not to chastise it" (*Dark Night,* II, 5).

57 See St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* chap. 10.

it is already undergoing tremendous suffering and horrible pain. As a result, the soul never ceases to give thanks to God and renews the abandonment made of itself to God. Here the soul offers itself to Him and begs Him for all things, and especially for creatures which are opposed to it. . . . Our Lord asks a disinterestedness which is so great that at first terror is felt, but later, ah later, what great freedom of spirit is experienced! . . . It is necessary to sacrifice oneself truly and to abnegate oneself profoundly; in a word, to hate oneself with a holy hatred. . . . Such is the valor of grace which makes all things easy if the soul is generous and faithful. Without these two wings, however, the soul cannot advance a single step. . . .

Knowing all this, should I not suffer? You already know, dear Father, how great is the suffering of love, which the soul cannot explain. It is a suffering sweet and gentle and filled with delights but at times it is terrible to endure. It is a martyrdom which dissolves the heart.

4. The Sorrowful and Sweet Abandonment of the Soul

Says St. Teresa (*Life,* chap. 20; see *The Spiritual Canticle,* stanza 15):

For, although the distress I refer to is felt bv the soul, it is also felt by the body. Both seem to share in it, and it does not cause the same extreme sense of abandonment as does this. In producing the latter, as I have said, we can take no part, though very often a desire unexpectedly arises, in a way which I cannot explain. And this desire, which in a single moment penetrates to the very depths of the soul, begins to weary it so much that the soul soars upwards, far above itself and above all created things, and God causes it to be so completely bereft of everything that, however hard it may strive to do so, it can find nothing on earth to bear it company. Nor does it desire company; it would rather die in its solitude. Others may speak to it, and it may itself make every possible effort to speak, but all to no avail; do what it may, its spirit cannot escape from that solitude. God seems very far from the soul then, yet sometimes He reveals His greatness in the strangest way imaginable—nor, I think, believed or understood—save by those who have experienced it. For it is a communication intended, not to comfort the soul but to show it the reason why it is wearied—namely, that it is so far away from the Good which contains all that is good within Itself.

In this communication the desire grows, and with it the extremity of loneliness experienced by the soul with a distress so subtle and yet so piercing that, set as it is in a desert, it can, I think say literally, as the Royal

Prophet said, when he was in the same state of loneliness (except that, being a saint, he may have been granted that experience by the Lord in a higher degree): *Vigilavi, et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto.* . . . The soul, then, seems to be, not in itself at all, but on the housetop, or the roof, of its own house, and raised above all created things; I think it is far above even its own very highest part.

On other occasions the soul seems to be going about in a state of the greatest need, and asking itself: "Where is thy God?" . . . At other times I used to remember some words of Saint Paul, about his being crucified to the world. I do not say that this is true of me—indeed, I know it is not—but I think it is true of the soul when no comfort comes to it from Heaven, and it is not in heaven, and when it desires no earthly comfort, and is not on earth either, but is, as it were, crucified between Heaven and earth; and it suffers greatly, for no help comes to it either from the one hand or from the other. For the help which comes to it from Heaven is, as I have said, a knowledge of God so wonderful, and so far above all that we can desire, that it brings with it greater torment; for its desire grows in such a way that I believe its great distress sometimes robs it of consciousness, though such a state as that lasts only for a short time. It seems as though it were on the threshold of death, save that this suffering brings with it such great happiness that I know of nothing with which it may be compared. It is a martyrdom, severe but also delectable; for the soul will accept nothing earthly that may be offered it, even though it were the thing which it had been accustomed to enjoy most: it seems to fling it away immediately. It realizes clearly that it wants nothing save its God; but its love is not centred upon any particular attribute of Him: its desire is for the whole of God and it has no knowledge of what it desires. By "no knowledge," I mean that no picture is formed in the imagination; and in my opinion, for a greater part of the time during which it is in that state, the faculties are inactive; they are suspended by their distress, just as in union and rapture they are suspended by joy.

O Jesus! I wish I could give Your Reverence a clear explanation of this, if only so that you might tell me what it is, for this is the state in which my soul now continually finds itself. As a rule, when not occupied, it is plunged into these death-like yearnings, and, when I am conscious that they are beginning, I become afraid, because they do not mean death. But when I am actually in that condition, I should like to spend the rest of my life suffering in that way, although the pain is so excessive that one can hardly bear it, and occasionally, according to those of my sisters who sometimes see me like this, and so now understand it better, my pulses almost cease to beat, my bones are all disjointed, and my hands are so

stiff that sometimes I cannot clasp them together. Until the next day I have pains in the wrists, and in the entire body, as though my bones had been wrenched asunder.

Occasionally I really think that, if things are to go on like this, it must be the Lord's will to end them by putting an end to my life; for the distress I am in is severe enough to kill me, only I do not deserve that it should do so. All my yearning at such a time is to die: I do not think of purgatory, or of the great sins I have committed, for which I have deserved to go to hell. Such is my yearning to see God that I forget everything and the deserted and solitary state I am in seems better than all the world's companionship. If anything should comfort a person in this condition, it would be to speak with another who has passed through the same torment, for she finds that, despite her complaints of it, no one seems to believe her.

The soul in this state is also tormented because its distress has so greatly increased that it no longer desires solitude, as it did before, and the only companionship it seeks is with one to whom it can voice its complaint.

I ask Your Reverence, what rest can I have in this life, since the rest which I used to enjoy, and which consisted in prayer and solitude, wherein the Lord would comfort me, is habitually turned into this torment; and yet it is so delectable, and the soul is so conscious of its worth, that it desires it more than all the favours which it had been accustomed to enjoy. It believes it, too, to be a safer state, because it is the way of the Cross; and in my view it comprises a delight of exceeding worth, because the body gets nothing from it but distress, whereas the soul, even while suffering, rejoices alone in the joy and happiness which this suffering brings.

At first I was afraid, as I almost always am when the Lord bestows a favour on me, though His Majesty reassures me as I go on. He told me not to fear but to set greater store by this favour than by any other which He had granted me; for by this distress the soul was purified, worked upon and refined like gold in the crucible, so that He might the better set in it the enamel of His gifts: it was being cleansed now of the impurities of which it would need to be cleansed in purgatory.

5. How the Divine Touch Destroys the Impurities of the Soul

Says Father Hoyos:

The divine touch is like a flash of lightning which turns to dust whatever it touches. It seems to reduce the spirit to nothingness, consuming it and then immediately raising it up again so that it may undergo

death anew. . . . When God permits this force which is felt in the depth of the soul to be communicated also to the body, it leaves the body without any feeling whatever except for certain most bitter pains which are experienced in its very bones. . . . Together with that touch of the divine essence, new lisTit and love are communicated to the soul, for this is the way the Lord communicates Himself to souls. . . . By means of this sovereign light the soul sees the infinite goodness of God . . . yet without noting anything in particular about Him. The soul flings itself into a love of God, and this abandonment to divine love seems to be a most subtle and piercing desire which has no fulfillment nor can it have. One can readily understand what great torment this desire will cause the soul, seeing that its realization is impossible. Indeed, at times it is sufficient to take one's life away. The soul loves very intently here; it finds great delight, it is intoxicated and consumed with the infinity of the object of its desire. "They that eat Me," says the Beloved, "shall yet hunger: and they that drink Me shall yet thirst" (Ecclus. 24:29). . . . The soul sees all creation through the light which has been infused in it and it sees in an instant that nothing created can satiate its desire but will rather impede it. This constitutes a terrible martyrdom: to see that there is nothing on earth that can give comfort to the soul. The result is that the soul experiences a great distaste for all created things. . . . It breaks forth into sighs: "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear" (Ps. 16:15). As completely shattered by this arduous struggle, the soul cries out: "But I am straitened between two: having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23). The soul knows that Christ is its life and it likewise sees that the body does nothing but hinder it from fully enjoying Him in this life. Therefore the lot to which the soul aspires is to detach itself from this mortal life. . . . The poor soul sees that it is, as it were, expiring on the cross, raised up above all creation and, to all appearances, abandoned by the Creator. . . . Then follow an abandonment, a terror, a desolation, and a tremendous martyrdom which I have frequently experienced. . . . But O divine Wisdom! When all this which I have described is taking place, who would not say that the soul is in great torment? And yet it is not so. Before this condition actually comes to pass, I am horrified; but while I am experiencing it, I feel only that it ends and I continue to live. The soul loves this state far more than any of His generous gifts. It experiences a joy, a comfort, and a jubilation, which I cannot describe, at the same time that it suffers extreme pain. If it were incumbent on the soul to make a choice, it would choose nothing else. This union of two extremes so greatly opposed is truly a prodigy. . . . Although the description of my

condition indicates violence, unrest, and many similar characteristics, it is not at all like this. Neither the body nor the external senses perceive this condition. It does not cause any bodily reaction; it does not break forth into lamentations, tears, or other manifestations of grief. It proceeds gently and sweetly as if it were happening in a dream.

From all that has been said, it can be seen that this state is equal to and even surpasses many great works. During this state the soul is purified as in a crucible. Actually this state is a great mercy and one of a high degree. It has nothing of imperfection in it as do the other flights or forces which, because of their violence, indicate that they are in part material.

6. The Mystical Cleavage of the Soul and the Spirit

In this state the divine Word effects that cleavage of the soul and spirit of which the Apostle speaks in his Epistle to the Hebrews (4:12). The result is that, while the spirit is submerged and completely lost in God, the soul must travel on alone, suffering in order to purify itself.

Says St. Catherine of Genoa (*Dial.*, II, 11):

My soul saw the spirit attracted to and fixed always on God and unable to withdraw itself for a moment from that ecstatic ravishment. It never ceased to submerge itself in the ocean of happiness and uncreated goodness where its only thought was to annihilate itself and to be transformed more and more into God. But God said to the soul, "You see My operations on the spirit, and you envy them; but for the present I shall not let you share in them. . . . It is necessary that you hold fast to the good which I expect from your abnegation. . . . You will be separated from the spirit which I shall keep hidden in the depths of My being. . . . I have permitted you to see but a mere spark of My glory, and it was extinguished immediately." . . . Ah, this division of the soul and the spirit surpasses my understanding more than heaven exceeds the earth. . . . Yet it is a divine work and for that reason it is a blessed work. I continue to adore it in spite of my desolation and I tell myself that at least in this way I shall love, for to suffer is to love. Cf. *Interior Castle*, seventh mansions, chap. 1.

St. Francis de Sales (*Love of God*, IX, 3) says:

The soul is sometimes found to be so overcome by interior afflictions that its faculties and powers are oppressed by the privation of all that might give it relief and by the apprehension of all that can afflict it. In imitation of its Savior, the soul begins to be troubled, to fear, and to be

di iiiiiycd. At length it becomes sorrowful with an agony which is similar to the agony of the dying, so that it can say: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." The soul desires and pleads with all its heart that if it be possible, this chalice may be taken from it. There remains to the soul only the supreme point of its spirit which clings to the divine will and says with sincere submission: "Eternal Father, not my will but Thine be done." The soul makes this resignation amidst such afflictions, contradictions, and repugnances that it hardly is aware that it is doing so. It seems to be done so languidly that it does not appear to proceed from a good heart, as it should, since what the soul is then enduring for the divine good-pleasure is not only endured without any delight and contentment, but even against the pleasure and contentment of the rest of the heart, which is permitted by love to bemoan itself, and to complain and repeat the lamentations of Job and Jeremias. Yet this is done in such a manner that the sacred submission still is preserved in the depth of the soul. . . . But this submission is not tender or sweet although it is sincere, strong, and full of love. . . . The more love is deprived of all help and cut off from any assistance from the powers and faculties of the soul, the more it is to be esteemed for preserving its fidelity so constantly.

7. The Dark and Purifying Contemplation

When the soul is raised to the very high degree of contemplation which takes place in the darkness of the divine light, it must prescind completely from every image or form, whether sensible or intellectual, and from all recollection of creatures, however good they may be. The soul must withdraw itself even from the consideration of the sacred humanity of our Lord, which is the gate through which it enters to the secrets of the Father. As long as the soul has any of these images before it, the Consoler will not come. As long as it is fixed upon anything created, it cannot receive the uncreated light. Yet, once the soul has passed through this divine contemplation, it must return anew, as St. Teresa advises, to the mysteries of the sacred humanity, which is the only way of arriving at light and life.[58]

[58] "Not only every sensible representation," says Blosius (*Institutions,* chap. 12), "but every spiritual consideration, impedes the work of God in the mystical union. Therefore, as soon as one is aware of the divine action, he must abandon every representation and particular consideration, no matter how holy and useful these things may be at other times, and remain in that internal silence where God works and speaks. . . . But as soon as the soul perceives that God has ceased working, it should return to itself and resume its customary exercises."

Said the eternal Father to St. Mary .Magdalen of Pazzi (*Œuvres,* I, 24):

He who desires to attain to My purity must not concern himself with any created thing . . . not even with the sacred humanity of My Word. The soul must fix itself only upon My divine essence, rejecting every thought and affection that does not pertain to My essence. The slightest attachment for any creature will be an obstacle to the acquisition of this purity or will be a stain on this purity if it is already possessed. . . . But to make you better understand these great truths, it is necessary that I blind you, for purity secs nothing, recognizes nothing, knows nothing. . . . Therefore you cannot acquire it except by total renunciation of your being, your knowledge, and your will. Yet you must not for that reason cease to work according to the virtues, following the interior attraction of My grace which directs you in all things. You must work without having a clear knowledge of your operations.

Bessed Angela of Foligno says (*Visions,* chap. 26):

My soul was enraptured, and I saw God with a clarity superior to any clarity I had ever known and in a plenitude far surpassing all other plenitude. . . . I saw God in a darkness, . . . because everything that I could think of seemed disproportionate to Him and there was given me a perfect trust, a certain hope, a security . . . that was ceaseless and guaranteed. I recollected myself totally in the infinite good which appeared to me in that darkness, and in its depth I found peace, the certainty that God was with me: *Emmanuel.* . . . My hope is buried in that certain and secret good which I perceive in the immense darkness. In Him I know and possess all that I wish to know or possess; in Him is all good. . . . I see nothing, and yet I see all; I have the absolute certainty of the Good which I possess. The more this supreme Good is seen in darkness, the better does the soul realize that He surpasses all goods. He is the hidden mystery. . . . All else is darkness; all else that can be thought of is as nothing beside Him. The divine power, wisdom, and will, which I have seen marvelously at other times, all seem much less than this. This is the whole, and all things else are but part of the whole. These latter things, do indeed bring with them a great joy which redounds to the body; but when God manifests Himself in this darkness, there is no smile on the lips, no fervor or devotion or love in the heart, and no trembling or movement of the body. . . . All the caresses which God has lavished upon me, which are numerous and unspeakable, all His sweetness and gifts . . . are nothing when compared to Him whom I see through the

darkness. . . . Alas, the words I speak seem to me to be nothing. What am I saying? My very words cause me horror. O supreme obscurity! My words arc veritable blasphemy. Silence! Silence! Silence! . . . When I dwell in that obscure darkness, I remember nothing at all of the humanity of Jesus Christ nor ought of any other form. I see all things and yet I sec nothing. Coming forth from that obscurity, I again see the God-man, who sweetly draws my soul to Himself.

Says Blosius *(Institutions,* chap. 12):

The soul which contemplates that luminous darkness or obscure light swOons aw'ay and, turning back to God, becomes one spirit with Him in the very depths of its being. Engendered there together with the Word which the Father utters, the soul is nobly renewed and made capable of every kind of good. Whence God the Father says of that soul: "This is My beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased." . . . The soul truly submerged and absorbed in God swims in the Divinity with an ineffable joy which redounds to the body so that eternal life begins for it in this exile. It keeps its thoughts firmly fixed on God; it possesses a certain supernatural unity of spirit wherein it dwells as in its proper mansion and it is inclined to the divine essence, toward that supreme unity wherein the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are one. Its conversations are in heaven; that is, with the three divine persons; and when it is supremely united to God, there is no longer any past or future for it but only an everlasting now. In that unchangeable eternity which is God, the soul possesses all things and, free of all representations, it recognizes the supreme order and distinction of things. Thus, surpassing all understanding, the soul flies to its beginning, God, where it is made light in His light. Before this light all the natural and even the infused lights are darkened just as the light of the stars is darkened in the face of the sun, for when the uncreated light is born, the created light vanishes. . . . Now all the passions of the soul are subdued, and it is no longer motivated by them. Both in adversity and in prosperity, it enjoys an essential peace. . . . Such souls, although they are greatly illumined by the divine light in which they see clearly what is to be done or omitted, nevertheless subject themselves to others joyfully and for the love of God. They give complete obedience in all things that are in accordance with God's will and they take the lowest place. They do not become proud because of the gifts and talents which they have received, because they are deeply submerged in their own nothingness. They do not presume on themselves for they know that it is God who works all the good they do. Remaining truly humble and filled with a filial fear, they consider them-

selves unprofitable servants. They avoid even the slightest faults, and the negligences which they incur through weakness are washed and expiated in the blood of Christ. They abandon many of the practices and customs which they formerly employed because now they have no attachment to anything. They are no longer their own, but they are Jesus Christ's. They remain unknown by the world, nor is their simple and truly Christian conversation, which soars to heavenly things, readily heeded except by those who enjoy the same grace. For such souls are not accustomed to manifest outwardly any singular or unusual mannerisms. They appear sweet and kind in all their dealings and affable to all as long as the affair is not sinful. They are not extremely severe, but meek and compassionate. This is one of the proofs that they cannot be separated now from God. . . . But because they speak with humility and hold themselves in low esteem, these hidden sons of God are frequently disdained by those who display exterior signs of holiness and especially by those who, through self-will, lead a base life.

The Spiritual Marriage

It will now be understood that the promises of the espousal must sometimes be repeated in another kind of ceremony and must ultimately be solemnly ratified in the spiritual marriage which is a perfect and stable union wherein there are scarcely any separations or periods of dryness and desolation. This matrimony is celebrated and contracted before the entire august Trinity, and the soul now habitually enjoys the vision and familiar converse of the three adorable persons.

This prodigious union, which very few souls (even of those esteemed to be most privileged) attain in this life and which for that reason seems to be something proper to glory, is not restricted to the faculties of the soul nor does it have a transitory character. It is verified and manifested in the very essence of the soul, and the soul not only works with the divine activity which the Holy Ghost infuses in it rather than by its own activity, but it truly lives and feels that it is living more by the divine life which is communicated to it than by the human life which it possesses of itself. So it is that such souls are able to call and actually do call the Holy Ghost "Soul of my life and Life of my soul"; or, better, "Soul of my soul and Life of my life." There is much more here than a perfect conformity of love and operation; there is a profound transformation which

results in a certain conformity of life in the mystical unity of the Spirit.'[1]"

St. John of the Cross says:

It has remained now, for the said Spiritual Marriage to be made between the soul aforementioned and the Son of God. This is without comparison far greater than the Spiritual Betrothal because it is a total transformation in the Beloved, wherein on either side there is made surrender by total possession of the one to the other with a certain consummation of the union of love, wherein the soul is made Divine and becomes God by participation, in so far as may be in this life. And thus I think that this estate is never attained without the soul being confirmed in grace therein; for the faithfulness of both is confirmed, that of God being confirmed in the soul; wherefore this is the loftiest estate which in this life is attainable. For even as in the consummation of marriage according to the flesh the two become one flesh, as says the Divine Scripture, even so, when this Spiritual Marriage between God and the soul is consummated, there are two natures in one spirit and love.[60]

Although this may seem absurd, it should not astonish us. Rather it should fill us with admiration for the marvelous love which God manifests to us. We know that grace and the communication of the Holy Ghost are received, not in the potencies of the soul, but in its very essence or substance, for it communicates to us a participation in the divine nature, a truly divine life which makes us sons of God and therefore capable of performing works meritorious of eternal life.[61] Living in grace, we live that divine life in all truth although

69 St. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joan. l,* XI: "It is false to say that we cannot possess any union with God other than that of a conformin' of wills. Over and above this, there is another union that is much more excellent in which man is so assimilated to God, through an intimate communication of the divinity, that, without losing his proper nature, man becomes transformed in Him as iron is when thrust into the fire. . . . By means of this union our Lord desires that His disciples should be one with Him so that, engulfed in Him, they become engrafted on Him and intimately united to Him through a communication of the deity. . . . Union with God cannot be effected except through a participation in the Holy Ghost who communicates His own sanctity to us. . . . Thus, transforming souls into Himself, in a certain manner, He impresses on them the divine likeness."

"Since we should possess," St. Cyril adds *(Thesaur.,* II, chap. 2), "one and the same operation with God, it is necessary that we share in His very nature."

60 *The Spiritual Canticle,* stanza 22.

01 Froget, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit,* p. 147: "Unlike actual grace, which is a passing help to virtue, an enlightening of the intellect, a prompting of the will, in brief a transient motion intended to make us produce an act superior to the powers of nature, grace proper, i.e., sanctifying grace, is a stable and abiding gift

usually we scarcely take any account of it. We are divine and yet we do not realize it. We live only according to our human life and, because of our lukewarmness, we smother the seed of eternal life or impede its growth, if, indeed, we do not lose it entirely.

By denying themselves in order to follow the divine motions with all docility, the saints augment this life as much as they can and strive to give it a free development. Yet, as long as they proceed along the "ordinary" ways, however much they give themselves over to holy works and however great their pious affections and the testimony of a good conscience, they do not usually have a very clear concept of that life or of those divine energies.

This knowledge is proper to the contemplative or mystical state which, according to some, is characterized by an interior awareness of the divine touches through which the soul feels more or less clearly the presence of the vivifying Spirit. In the measure that the various faculties of the soul are purified, He permeates them more and more and unites Himself to them in so evident a manner that the soul is aware of the progress of this union. Even though this union existed from the very beginning, it was imperfect in the soul of the beginner; but as the soul is gradually perfected and strengthened, this awareness springs forth more and more into the realm of consciousness.[82] It begins, as we have said, by being felt in the intellect by means of the enlightenment of the prayer of recollection. It then invades the will by means of the prayer of quiet and is finally perceived in all the potencies together in the prayer of union,

which, received into the very essence of the soul, becomes in it, as it were, a second nature of a transcendent order, a principle of supernatural life, the firm root of meritorious acts."

"Ipsam essentiam animae in quoddam divinum esse elevans, ut idonea sit ad divinas operationes" (St. Thomas, *Sent. 11,* dist. 24, q.i, a.3).

"No one can possess a spiritual operation unless first he receive a spiritual being," says St. Thomas *(De veritate,* q.27, a.2), "just as he cannot possess any natural operation unless he possess the being of that particular nature."

Therefore, as Bacuez says *(op. cit.,* p. 223), actual and habitual graces "tend to associate us with the intimate life of God, present in us by means of His Spirit, for the purpose of producing in us and through us works of eternal salvation." Also, St. Thomas states (Ia Ilae, q. 114, a.3): "If, however, we speak of a meritorious work, inasmuch as it proceeds from the grace of the Holy Ghost moving us to life everlasting, it is meritorious of life everlasting condignly. For thus the value of its merit depends upon the power of the Holy Ghost moving us to life everlasting."

62 Ribet, *Myst.,* I, p. 257: "The soul will not only believe in the divine communication which is effected in it through grace, but it will see, feel, and taste that ineffable union which is realized between God and itself."

On reaching the espousal, the union is even more intimate and permanent, and the touches of the Beloved are not only felt in the faculties, which they captivate and unite, but they penetrate still further and are felt in the very depth of the soul. As the soul is more and more purified by those delicate touches, the awareness of the divine becomes much more evident. Souls sometimes feel not only that they are working divinely with all their faculties, but that they actually live a divine life, although this manner of living is not yet continual. The union is completed and perfected in the spiritual marriage wherein it is also made permanent. God takes full possession of the whole soul and unites it to Himself in a most intimate manner. The divine life is now manifested in the soul without any kind of obstacle.[63] The soul then perceives that God works and lives in it, or better, that it is completely transformed in God and deified.[64] This takes place to such an extent that the soul loses all thought of self and it seems that it is no longer the soul that exists, but that God lives and works in it through this new life. Truly, as St. John of the Cross says, the beloved is now transformed into the Beloved.[65]

"Divine matrimony," says Ven. Mary of the Incarnation, "is the most sublime of all states. God takes possession of the soul in such a

63 Cf. St. Teresa, *Interior Castle,* seventh mansions, chap. 2.

64 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* IV, chap. 16: "By means of the union and transformation of Thyself into the soul and of the soul into Thee, here on earth through grace and in heaven through glory, Thou dost deify the soul. O deification! The soul which has the happiness of arriving at the state of being made God, like a sphere irradiating the rays of the sun, is made luminous and resplendent as the sun itself. We are transformed into Thy very image, from clarity to clarity."

65 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 65: "Our transformation must be entire because the God-man is all love. . . . He desires that He and ourselves should be made one in love. I call those sons of the Spirit who, through grace and charity, live in God in the perfection of transformed love. . . . Only those are vessels of election and sons of the Spirit in whom God has placed His love and reposes in them because He has been attracted to them by reason of His own likeness. It is His grace and love that have formed His image in the soul. I call him perfect who has transformed his life into the image of the God-man. God asks for all our heart and not merely a portion of it. . . . Our God is a jealous God. . . . The first property of love is to transform one into the other in regard to their wills. . . . The second property is to transform the one into the other as regards their faculties. . . . The third is the perfect transformation of the soul in God. Then the soul is inaccessible to temptations because it no longer lives in itself but in Him. . . . Moreover, love carries with it a power to reveal secrets, and this obliges the soul to manifest its depths. This seems to me to be the primary characteristic of love and the necessary complement of the actions of love. . . . Love is not only a power of assimilation, but a power of unity which makes all things the same."

way that He becomes the very basis of its substance, and what transpires there is so subtle and divine that it is impossible to describe it. It is a permanent state in which the soul lives peacefully and tranquilly in perfect union with God. Its sighs and longings are for the Beloved, in a state free from every admixture as far as is possible in this life. In these sighs the soul speaks to Him without effort of His mysteries and of all that it desires." [88]

The holy soul in this state melts and faints away. Dead now to self, it lives only for God. Having lost self completely, it is despoiled of everything earthly and human and is clothed in the heavenly and the divine, even to the point of being transformed into God. That which formerly was cold is now ardent; that which was darkness is now light; and that which was rough is now smooth. All things possess the tincture of heaven, for all is deified; and the very essence of the soul is blended with that of God.[87] Truly, the soul lives a life that is entirely divine. It lives as if it were in glory and has all its conversation there. The most loving Master, the Word of the Father, is so intimately associated with the soul that He manifests to it, as to His faithful spouse, His most august secrets.[88]

ee Sauvé, *Etats mystiques,* p. 90: "The spiritual marriage is here below so perfect an evolution of baptism, of grace, of the divine virtues, of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and in particular, of wisdom, that many authors see in it a special mission of the divine persons who come to crown and perfect the former missions." The same author says in another work *(Le culte du C. de J.* élév. 26) that God "unites Himself to the will by the prayer of quiet, to all our faculties by the prayer of union, and to our entire life and being by spiritual marriage. The prayer of quiet and that of union do not endure for a long time but they can be renewed at frequent intervals. The union of marriage, on the other hand, is habitual and permanent; it is the perfection of union and the perfection of freedom. The soul is then habitually united to God and united in such a way that it can easily devote itself to external things. It is a prelude to heaven where the soul will be eternally transfixed by the presence of God and at the same time will be able with perfect freedom to attend to its relations with the angels and saints and to contemplate transfigured creation."

67 Cf. Blosius, *Inst, spir.,* chap. 12, no. 2.

M The Spiritual Canticle, stanza 22: "Wherefore, since the soul now lives a life so happy and glorious as this life of God, let each one consider, if he can, how delectable a life will be that which the soul lives, wherein neither can God perceive aught that is displeasing to Him, nor can the soul perceive it, but the soul enjoys and perceives the delight of the glory of God in its very substance, which is now transformed in Him. ... In this high estate of the Spiritual Marriage the Spouse reveals His wondrous secrets to the soul, as to His faithful consort, with great readiness and frequency, for true and perfect love can keep nothing hidden from the loved person. He communicates principally to it sweet mysteries concerning l lis Incarnation and the ways and manners of human redemption, which is one of the highest works of God, and is thus most delectable to the soul."

The expressions of the great mystics who seek to describe this exalted union as best they can are so overwhelming that they surpass any kind of exaggeration. They seem to make use of the expressions of pantheists or to identify this union with the hypostatic union. The examples of a saturated sponge totally immersed in water or of iron transformed into fire seem to the mystics to be very deficient comparisons. Nor is the example of two candles which are so conjoined that there is no way of distinguishing them and which, thus joined, give but a single light, a symbol which satisfies the mystical writers, for this symbol serves to illustrate only the espousal. The least improper symbol would be that of a drop of water placed in an ocean of wine and so diffused and compenetrated that it can no longer be distinguished or separated; [69] or that of a particle of iron in a blazing furnace; or that of the rays of the light of a candle that blend and harmonize with the sun's rays which enter through the window. "The soul thus united is so transformed and absorbed in God, in the fire of a white and melting love, that the two things become one . . . and the soul is transformed into its God." [70]

In all these symbols we must always preserve not only the distinction of natures, which were not even blended in Christ, but also the distinction of persons. However submerged in God the soul may be, it always retains its own proper nature, although greatly sublimated and divinized, and it always remains acutely aware of its own ego, if only to realize its own nothingness and the divine riches that are heaped upon it. It is always a human person, living two lives at the same time, one human and the other divine. The sublime expression of the Apostle: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me," gives us the clearest understanding of the mystery of this incomparable union. The soul enamored of its God in whom it is submerged can very well say that "the soul is not God, but it is deified by God; . . . and the soul and God, both are one." [71]

69 Even the liturgy uses this formula: "O God, who in a wonderful manner didst create and ennoble human nature, and still more wonderfully hast renewed it, grant that, by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord." This prayer is so much the more significant inasmuch as it is accompanied by the solemn rite, the mixture of the wine and water, which signifies the union of the faithful with Jesus.

70 Nicholas Factor, *Opuscules,* pp. 70 f.

71 *Ibid.,* pp. 74-84.

Blessed Henry Suso says 72 that "the soul that is in God in this lofty and ineffable manner becomes one thing with Him, yet it retains its particular and natural being. It does not lose its own being, but it possesses and uses it divinely. It lives in a perfect manner, for it does not lose that which it has and it acquires that which it does not have; that is to say, a divine existence. The essence of the soul is united to the essence of God, and the powers and faculties of the soul to the activity of God. The soul realizes that it is united with Him in His infinite being in which it is given to the soul to rejoice."

This union, as Sauvé remarks, "is so perfect and God takes such complete possession of the soul and its life that it seems that the life of God and man are morally blended and that the life of the soul is transformed into the life of God." 73

The venerable John of Saint Samson says that, because of the supernatural beauty and glory which irradiate from God and the soul, they appear to be so perfectly identified that one could say there is a transfiguration of God into the soul and of the soul into God. God Himself seems to live, work, and suffer in the soul. Ruysbroeck also teaches that our spirit incessantly receives the impression and divine light of its exemplar in the very depths and center of its naked essence. The spirit is then the permanent dwelling place of God, and God visits it at each instant with the brilliance of new splendors. Thus does the spirit possess God in the nudity of its substance, and God likewise possesses the spirit. The spirit lives in God and He in it.

In such a state charity is perfectly ordered, and the soul lives in perfect love, in that invincible divine love which cannot be extinguished in the waters of tribulation and which has triumphed over a thousand and one deaths. The ardor of this charity is the fire of the Spirit of love who animates it and its brilliance is the flames of Jahweh.74

Since the soul now possesses the divine Spouse, the Word of the

72 *Eternal Wisdom,* chap. 32.

73 *Etats,* p. 91.

74 Cant. 8:6-7. *The Living Flame,* stanza 1: "This flame of love is the Spirit of its Spouse—that is, the Holy Spirit. And this flame the soul feels within it, not only as a fire that has consumed and transformed it in sweet love, but also as a fire which burns within it and sends out flame, as I have said, and that flame, each tittle that it breaks into flame, bathes the soul in glory and refreshes it with the temper of Divine life."

power oi God 76 who is placed as a seal on its heart and its arm, it loves and works as it ought and in the way God wishes. The charity which the Holy Ghost pours forth in torrents into the heart no longer finds any resistance there, no obstacles or difficulties, but only the best dispositions, and therefore it works divinely in all things. The soul is completely lost in God and transformed through love in the three divine persons. It is God who works and lives in the soul and takes pleasure in the perfection of its divine operations. The soul, in turn, offers to God the virtues and benefits which He has communicated to it, the precious fruits of His Spirit, and even the Spirit Himself whom the soul has received from God as a pledge of adoption and the dowry of eternal life. Now the eternal Father can say to the soul, which is a faithful likeness of His Son: "This is My beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased," 70 and as to a beloved daughter the Father reveals His most ineffable secrets. "The father shall make thy truth known to the children." 77

From this point on, the soul sees clearly the hidden mysteries of the spiritual life. It realizes the necessity of so many trials and purifications and it blesses the divine Doctor a thousand times for having cured all its wounds. The soul sees also the innumerable imperfections that formerly characterized its use of the virtues and even those works that seemed to be absolutely perfect. For now these things are not viewed through the deceitfulness of self-love, but the pure truth is seen in the spotless mirror of the divine essence.78 For that reason the soul never wearies of admiring and rejoicing in the glorious triumphs of that sweet Love.

75 Heb. 1:3.

7eBlosius, *Inst.,* chap. 12, sect. 4: "The soul which contemplates that bright obscurity and that obscure brightness, withdrawing from self and drawing to God, is made one with Him in the depth of its spirit. Generated together with the eternal Word of God which the Father speaks, the soul is nobly renewed and is rendered apt for very good work. Whence, God the Father says of that soul: 'This is My beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased.' "

Blessed Angela de Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 70: "My soul has been washed and purified in the Blood of Christ. . . . Jesus Christ, the Son of God, presented me to the Father and I heard these words: 'O My spouse and My love, whom I have loved in truth. I do not wish that thou shouldst come to Me laden with sorrows, but adorned with inamissable joy. Let the Queen dress in the royal mantle, for the day of her nuptials has arrived.' . . . Then God manifested to me His Word so that now I know what the Word is and I know what it is to utter the Word who desired to become incarnate for me."

77 Isa. 38:19.

78 St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chaps. 11-12: "The final act of love by which the soul is purified is effected in it by the divine operation without the soul's

Let us hear Blessed Angela of Foligno describe the phases of unifying love and the successive development, evolution, and transformation of the soul:

The transformation of the soul in God can be effected in three ways. The first unites the soul to the will of God (the conforming union); the second unites the soul with God Himself (the mystical union and espousal); the third unites the soul in God and God in the soul (the spiritual marriage).

The first transformation is the imitation of Jesus crucified, for the Cross is a manifestation of the divine Will. The second transformation unites the soul with God and its love is then not only an act of the Will, but the fountain of deep feeling and immense delight is opened, although there yet remains room for word and thought. The third transformation so fuses the soul in God and God in the soul that at the great height at which the mystery is effected all words and thoughts vanish. Only he who experiences these things understands them.

At the beginning of this love, the soul experiences a certain melting or dissolution, then a weakness, and finally it regains strength. . . . God bestows a love on the soul which is similar to created love. He lavishes on it His caresses and wonderful consolations for which the soul must never petition with importunity. Do not reject these things if God should grant them to you, for they are your mainstay and they incite you to seek Him and they preserve you from tedium. By means of these things the soul is raised to transformation and to the incessant search for the Beloved. But love also sometimes grows with absence and it begins to seek the Beloved for Himself. Not possessing Him as He is it feels its own weakness and no longer content with consolations, it searches for the very substance of Him who grants them. The more the soul is overwhelmed with the joys

having any part in it. The soul finds itself so filled with hidden imperfections that if it could see them all it would despair. But these imperfections remain hidden until the fire of love has totally consumed them. Only then does God make them known as in a mirror to let the soul realize that from Him alone docs it possess that fire of love which destroyed all the stains which disfigured it and removed all the obstacles which held the soul back from its ultimate happiness. . . . To understand this the soul must realize that what ordinarily passes for perfection in the eyes of man is defective in the eyes of God. All those things which man does and which seem perfect according to man's way of seeing, feeling, understanding, desiring, anti remembering, nevertheless cause certain stains and impurities on him as long as he does not recognize that the perfection of his works is a pure gift of God. The truth is that all our actions, in order to be perfect, must be produced in us without us; that is, we cannot be called their principal cause. . . . Such precisely arc the opera tions of God in the soul when He effects in it through Himself alone and without any merit on the part of the soul that love so pure and free from imperfection, of which we have spoken. These divine operations penetrate and inflame the soul tn a wondrous manner."

Ulih h i miti limn I Inn, the more does it pine and sigh in its growing h·'ᵏ Im ilmt n hu h is necessary is the presence of God Himself.

Ilm u lu h the soul, united to God, has become firmly established in Initii in which it finds its rest, complaints and sighs and longings are no longer heard, nor is there any rapture or swooning. Feeling that it is unworthy of any good or any gift and that it deserves a hell even more terrible than the one which actually exists, the soul becomes so firmly established in stability, wisdom, order, solidarity, and courage that it would defy death itself by the strength of its love. It possesses the plenitude of love of which it is capable.

Then God increases the soul's capacity so that it can receive what He desires to place in it. The soul then sees that only God IS and that all things else are nothing except in and through Him. . . . So profoundly does it see the majesty of order in the divine light that nothing disturbs it, not even the absence of God. It is so conformed to Him that it does not seek Him when He is absent, but places in His hands the ordering of all things. . . . An ardent desire springs up from the depth of the soul to impel it to perform with great ease the works of penitence. . . . This flaming love is perfect and it moves the soul to a perfect imitation of the crucified Christ who is the perfection of all perfection. . . . The soul must advance always, because the Man-God never abandoned the cross of penance. . . . The transformation of the soul in the will of God is not proved by words, but by actions and the imitations of Christ.

When the transformed soul dwells in the bosom of God, when it has attained perfect union and the fullness of vision, it rests in a peace which surpasses all understanding. . . . Here it sees the Being of God and it sees how all other creatures receive their being from Him who is BEING par excellence. . . . Introduced to this vision, the soul drinks a marvelous wisdom from the living fountain, a science far surpassing all words, and a firm circumspection. . . . It sees the perfection of all things that come from God and it loses the faculty of contradicting, for it sees in the mirror without blemish the wisdom which creates. It sees that evil comes from the creature who destroys that which was good. This vision of the supreme Essence arouses in the soul a corresponding love . . . and the Essence itself induces it to love all that He loves.[79]

Privileged souls which arrive at so sublime and happy a state usually enjoy, almost habitually, a certain kind of vision or clear presence of the Blessed Trinity which is somewhat pronounced. Before this wonderful mystery in which such souls see the attributes

[70] *Visions,* chap. 64.

of the divine persons and their titles of honor, they swoon away in transports of charity. Yet ecstasies and raptures are seldom experienced in this state; nor are swoonings frequent, because the whole being has been so fortified, regenerated, and vivified that the excess of interior light, far from depriving the soul of the use of the senses, reaches out to fortify and vivify everything, as happens in the state of glory.[80] As a result, the soul loses some of its habitual weaknesses. We have already seen how, according to St. John of the Cross (*Canticle,* 22), this quasi-glorious state brings with it confirmation in grace[81] and, we may add, the complete

80 Blosius, *op. cit.,* chap. 2, sect. 4: "Immersed and absorbed in God, the soul swims hither and thither in the divinity and abounds in unspeakable joy. This joy redounds to the body also and the soul begins eternal life in this exile."

81 Scaramelli (*op. cit.,* tract 2, nos. 221-26) maintains this same doctrine, basing his statement on the authority of St. Bernard, St. Lawrence Justinian, and, we may say, all the mystics who symbolize this union by that of a matrimony as indissoluble as that between Christ and His Church. St. Teresa of Avila, in spite of the timidity, vacillation, and restrictions which so often conceal her thought from those who do not know how to read her, makes this fact clearly understood in the second chapter of the seventh mansions of the *Interior Castle* where she says that the relation between God and the soul in this state is like that of two married persons who can no longer be separated. Blosius states it in this fashion: "Whence it is probable that they can never be separated from God" (*Inst.,* chap. 12, sect. 4, no. 3).

Blessed Angela de Foligno states this truth many times and in a most energetic fashion, but it will suffice for us to cite two passages: "I asked God to give me something of Himself . . . and I saw that Love came to me. I saw Him with the eyes of my soul and much more clearly than I have ever seen anything with the eyes of my body. God gave me evident testimony and I was satisfied. I was filled with a love to which I would not hesitate to assure an eternity and if any creature were to prophesy the death of my love, I would say to him, 'You lie.' And if that creature were an angel, I would say to him, 'I know you. You are he who fell from heaven'" (*Visions,* chap. 25). "My soul was presented before the face of God with a great security, without shadow or cloud. It was presented with an unknown joy which surpasses all understanding. . . . I experienced the ineffable and divine brilliance. . . . When, after this experience the soul returned to itself, it discovered that it could rejoice in any pain or injury borne for God and it felt the impossibility of any separation from God. For that reason I exclaimed: 'O sweet Lord! What is there that can separate me from Thee?' And I heard the reply: 'With the help of My grace, nothing can separate thee from Me'" (*op. cit.,* chap. 27).

Blessed Raymond of Capua, in writing of the spiritual marriage of St. Catherine of Siena, says that it seems to him to be a confirmation in divine grace, with the ring as its pledge, and that God frequently reveals to His predestined ones that they will persevere in His love and grace. It is because God wishes these souls to combat in a corrupt world that Catherine, although a woman, had to be an apostle. Tauler writes in his *Institutions* (chap. 39): "In the supreme knowledge of God and in the perfect delight and union with Him, there is given this certitude of eternal bliss. Those who reach this state can confidently say with the Apostle: 'For I am sure that neither death, nor life, . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God'" (Rom. 8:38). According to St. Thomas (*Opusc.* 61, chap.

exemption from the pains of purgatory, for these souls are found to be so pure here on earth that, when the bonds of matter are loosed, they can fly directly to the face-to-face vision of God. On the other hand, the ceaseless light which they enjoy and the stability of the pact of the spiritual marriage constitute to a high degree that "special revelation" which the Council of Trent speaks of.[82] The Holy Spirit Himself comes to these souls to give them testimony that they are the sons of God and, if sons, heirs also.[83]

The activity which such souls manifest is infinite and truly divine. One such soul is sometimes able in a few years' time to effect a general reform, as we see in the case of St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Hyacinth, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Vincent Ferrer. Consider also St. Catherine of Siena, who lived a life of sickness and died at the age of thirty-three. Yet she was quick to go to Avignon or to Rome, or Pisa, or Florence, or wherever the good of the Church, the salvation of souls, or private or public need called her. Her nights were spent in prayer and by day she visited hospitals, consoling the afflicted, converting sinners, and finding a remedy for all manner of evils and adversities. She wrote divine books and dictated to four secretaries at once on matters as grave as they were

13), these enraptured souls, closely united with God, are able to experience this firm security even now.

The eternal Father said to St. Magdalen of Pazzi: "The knowledge and love of My divine essence unite the soul to Me in so inseparable a manner that it can say with St. Paul: 'Who will separate me from the charity of Christ?' " (*Œuvres,* Part IV, chap. 19.) St. Rose of Lima solemnly affirmed to the ecclesiastical judges who were deputed to examine her spiritual life that she seemed to be confirmed in grace and certain of never losing God. On other occasions she not only showed herself certain of salvation but likewise convinced that she would not have to suffer even an instant in purgatory. These are the great souls whom God, by a special grace, preserves and maintains in His love in such a way that they are beyond the possibility of ever being lost. (See St. Francis de Sales, *The Love of God,* Part IV, chap, i.)

82 Sess. VI, can. 9.

83The author of *Las Nueve Penas* (chap. 13) asks: "Who can doubt that souls such as these are certain of eternal happiness? Once they have become ohe thing with God, who can separate them from Him? God will not permit them to fall into the hands of the enemy because they are His dearly beloved. When death frees them, they fly straight to heaven. . . . They leave this life already purified and there remains nothing for them to expiate. . . . They are in no danger because of their contact with the world, for they are free from all servile fear. They fear neither torments nor death nor persecutions. They have only a filial fear of not pleasing God enough or of not serving Him as they desire to do. . . . They deplore the blindness of men and the evils in the Church, and this sorrow is one of their greatest crosses, for it tears at their heart and brings them to the point of death."

varied, sending directives to popes and kings, princes and prelates, religious and married persons, and all these in a correct and elegant style, although she had never learned how to read.

Consider St. Teresa of Avila, who erected numerous monasteries in a few years and wrote her admirable treatises on the mystical life; and the saintly Father Hoyos, who left his retirement and in two years' time traveled the length and breadth of Spain, inflaming it with a love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus.84

Those who believe that the contemplative life breeds slothfulness should consider these examples.85 Today this type of life is despised, either because of blind ignorance or refined malice. Some appreciation is shown for religious institutes of the active life whose humanitarian efforts are quite evident, but some persons would wish to choke off the very fountain from which all those benefits flow: that contemplation which they despise. Without the contemplative phase, all activity would be vain, sterile, and dead; it would soon degenerate and cease altogether. Why is it that no great institutes which exact heroic self-abnegation are to be found outside of Catholicism? And whence comes this heroism if not from the divine energy which the eternal Father infuses into those recollected souls that contemplate and copy in themselves Flis own infinite perfections? 80

84 Practically the same thing occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century when the Ven. A. M. Taigi, a poor seamstress and married woman with a large family to support and educate, did so much for the good of souls that Pius IX said of her that she had been sent by God against the evils of the Church.

85 Weiss, *Apologie,* IX, it: "There are some things that happen to saints and to no one else; things in which they triumph and all others fail. Filled with confidence in God and zeal for His honor, the saints undertake the impossible through obedience and they triumph. . . . They pray as if they had nothing else to do, and yet they write books and perform actions of such a kind that one would be tempted to believe that they have not a moment for prayer."

Blosius, *Institutions,* chap, i: "Neither contact with men nor external duties prevent them from remaining always in the presence of God for they have learned how to preserve the unity of the spirit amid a multiplicity of things. For that reason they enjoy a stable and basic recollection."

"Thanks to superior illuminations, activity becomes extremely easy. Everything petty, narrow, and human disappears. Fixed on God, aided by Him, and borne by Him, the soul finds a facility for all things and an aptitude which is as habitual as its union with God" (an anonymous citation βivεη by Sauvé, *Etats,* p. 90).

88 Getino, *Vida y Procesos de Fray Luts de Leon,* p. 30: "There is no activity comparable to that of the soul which contemplates nor any concentration of energy comparable to its energy. Neither can history show any persons of an activity im intense as that of those who, buried for a long time in the quiet of contemplation, go forth to infect the world, battling against all things and overcoming sorirm·*

No, the contemplative life will not cease nor can it ever cease as long as the Church endures.[87] If it is torn out of monasteries, it withdraws again to the deserts and catacombs, like the glorious lady of the Apocalypse who was pursued by the dragon (Apoc. 12:6-14), and to the intimate retreat of hearts where the kingdom of God is and wherein nothing profane can enter.

There is not one of these great souls, however sequestered it may be, that is not able to spread the fruit of its activity very far and, even in spite of itself, to diffuse the good odor of its virtues. Amid the refined impiety of the beginnings of the last century, an obscure German nun, Sister Catherine Emmerich, confined to her house on a bed of suffering, exercised a remarkable influence not only on those around her, but even at such great distances as Berlin and Paris, in spite of her desire to suffer for God in solitude and oblivion. Put out of her convent, sick and despondent, she found a remedy for the ills of her neighbor, she healed many who were contrite of heart, she consoled the afflicted and edified the Church by "rooting out the thorns in the vineyard of the Lord and thus supplying for the neglect of many of God's ministers."

Even when they die, totally unknown, the salutary influence of the saints can be perceived from the moment of their death.

and customs. Peter the Hermit, Vincent Ferrer, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, Vincent de Paul, . . . does the world know of any souls of like temperament who did not come forth from the oven of contemplation?"

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* 11, sect. II, chap. 6, a. 1: "A man of prayer will do more in one year than another will do in his whole life."

87 Prov. 29:18: "When prophecy shall fail, the people shall be scattered abroad."

Meric, letter to Lejeune in *Manuel mystique:* "We shall always find in the Church privileged creatures who seem scarcely to live in this world. Their body is raised up by the force of their spirit and they live in those lofty and mysterious regions where their eyes contemplate spectacles which we do not understand. They breathe an atmosphere which makes them swoon away, and their transfigured soul causes to pass through their body certain irradiations which come from God Himself. . . . Their profound austerities astonish the priest who is charged with their spiritual direction. There is nothing that could make us better understand the blending of the incomparable grandeur of our ministry together with repulsive ugliness of the weaknesses which oppress us than the radiant vision of these creatures who, in their difficult ascent, ask assistance from our hands and leave behind them, in the eyes that have contemplated them, the imperishable reflection of eternal things."

For our part, we can never forget the indelible impression we received on seeing Mother Mary of the Queen of the Apostles transfigured, as it were, on her deathbed. This blessed servant of God died in the odor of sanctity on the thirteenth of August, 1905, at the age of twenty-five. She experienced the intensity of the great divine darkness, joining horrible sufferings with an anticipated glory.

Who is it but these elevated souls, these "lightning-rods of heaven," who constrain the arm of divine justice and turn deserved chastisements into blessings? They placate God and they bring down upon their country, indeed upon the whole world, innumerable blessings. Their pure and burning love weighs more in the divine balance than the perfidy of millions of impious men. They are sufficient to warrant that God should look with favor on the world. Without them the world would perish through its own wickedness. Those who hate the saints, hate themselves.[88]

Such is the power of these generous souls that, completely renouncing all things earthly and even themselves, they have been able to soar on the wings of divine love to the most sublime heights of contemplation. One such soul is more pleasing to God and is more closely united to Him than thousands or even millions of ordinary just souls who, however much they are engaged in good works, have not yet succeeded in divesting themselves of self.[89]

[88] Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* VII, chap. 4, a. 9: "When God bestows such grace upon a soul as to raise it to the highest degree of contemplation, he no longer refuses it anything; it commonly obtains everything it asks for. If it is requested to ask some favour of God, no sooner does it prepare to offer its petition, than it feels the Spirit of God carrying it away to the contemplation of admirable mysteries, in the midst of which it loses itself, thinking no more of the subject of its prayer, nor recollecting what it wished to ask; and yet God grants its request, and its desires are fulfilled without its bestowing anv attention upon them. A soul that has attained to this point of perfection, mav singly, by its prayers and merits before God, uphold a whole religious order or a whole kingdom."

"If these souls," says the author of *Las Nueve Penas (Joe. cit.),* are few in number, they are great in merit. Upon them, as upon solid pillars, God rests His Church. Without them Christianity would perish and the devil would gather the entire world into his net. . . . One such soul that lives in this lofty height is more loved by God and more useful to Christian society than a thousand others who serve it by following their own inclinations. . . . They are so dear to God and they so greatly enjoy His favor that if one of them should ask something of God and the rest of Christians should ask the contrary, that one would be heard preferably. . . . Oh how much better all things would be in the Church if men in their difficulties would take counsel of these servants of God whom God fills with so much love and light! But the world is so blind and so indifferent to truth that these saints in whom the Holy Spirit dwells are oppressed, scorned, and despised as the offcast of the world."

Blosius, *Inst, spir.,* IV, no. 2: "God finds more pleasure in any one of them than in many other men who are not intimately united to Him."

[89] Blessed Henry Suso, *La Union Divina,* II: "True life of the soul is to die to self and to abandon oneself to God. ... If you wish to be of use to the whole world, disdain all creatures and give yourself entirely to God. . . . When the potencies of the soul lose their own activity and when the elements of the body are purified, then our faculties reach their full perfection and return to their principle, who is God."

Such perfections shine forth in these privileged souls after they have passed beyond the mystical espousal, and they seem to have copied so well the image of the God-man, that they portray exteriorly certain glorious, if not divine, attributes.[90] Since God is activity by essence, He gives these souls mysterious powers which supplement their natural weakness and even make up for the lack of health or sleep. Thus we see that whenever duty or charity called her, St. Catherine of Siena immediately lost her fever and rose to make long journeys and perform great works. She would pass month after month engaged in intense activity, with scarcely any food or sleep, for often she took no food other than the Eucharist and only fifteen minutes of rest, and that on her knees. Similar things took place in the lives of many other saints, and some of them were even more amazing; for example, the amount of time spent in sleep by St. Ludwina over a period of thirty-five years was equivalent to only one full night of sleep.[91]

Blosius, *Inst, spir.,* chap, i: "It is certain that those who give themselves to God without measure and let Him work in them, are much beloved by Him and in a short time they bring more good to the Church than they could bring who have not yet reached that union."

Sauvé, *Etats mystiques,* pp. 6o ff.: "In these higher states in which the soul seems idle, it is incomparably more active and more influential in the Church. When God works in the soul, it is not to diminish its activity, but to perfect it. These souls are the help of the world, and one of them can reap more blessings and give more glory to God than a multitude of ordinary souls. When such souls are not dealing directly with their neighbors, they arc praying for them. They are for God the means of edifying His Church."

Lejeune, *Manuel mystique,* p. 27: "After the apostles and martyrs, it is the contemplatives who constitute the power and fecundity of the Church. The remarkable flowering of Christianity in the fourth century coincides with the epoch of the fathers in the desert. . . . The departure from the domain of the active life, far from being a source of weakness, is a principle of growth for that vital force by which the Church lives. Because this law of history has been forgotten and the proper emphasis has not been placed on contemplation, many of the efforts and sacrifices of our century are sterile and futile."

00 St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto,* IX: "Just as bodies are made brilliant and shining by contact with the sun's rays and become greatly illumined, . . . so souls are moved and illumined by the Holy Ghost and they manifest themselves as spiritual and send forth their grace to others. . . . Hence this is a likeness to God and, what is far beyond compare, you are made god."

Terrien, *op. cit.,* I, 344: "In the splendor of the transfiguration of the body of our Lord, the brilliance came from within, like a revelation of His divinity which lay beneath the appearance of our miseries. So also, the unusual prerogatives which we admire in the saints arc the expansion and external irradiation of the mystery which is worked in the depth of all sanctified souls." See *The Living Flame,* stanza 7.

91 St. Nicholas of Fliie took no food or drink for twenty successive years, except the reception of the Eucharist. This miracle was subjected to a scrupulous examina-

Often they radiate a heavenly light and penetrate the depths of one's heart. By a spiritual sense of smell they can distinguish the sinner and even the sins which make the sinner repulsive.[92] By a spiritual sense of touch or by a simple glance they can, through a mysterious attraction, identify objects which are sacred or blessed.[03] They are sometimes gifted with vision from a distance, the discernment of spirits, or agility and levitation of the body so that in their raptures the body ascends into the air or is drawn to the place where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. There they remain, in a brilliant and fiery light which does not burn their clothing. And

tion even during the life of the saint and it is accepted as an incontestable fact even by Protestant historians such as Müller. St. Nicholas received from the Eucharist a strength so great that his vigor was renewed and he felt no need for food or drink. In spite of this total abstinence, he undertook long journeys for the spiritual consolation of his countrymen and daily had to answer the questions of the many people who came to consult him in his hermitage. He became known as the prophet of Switzerland. Once when, under obedience, he took a piece of bread, he was seized with such a violent fit of vomiting that his very life seemed to be in danger. He was never again subjected to such a severe trial.

In the same way St. Catherine of Siena suffered extreme anguish whenever she was obliged to take anything, even a bit of bread or cooked vegetable, and there were long periods when her only nourishment was the Blessed Sacrament. Sometimes the mere sight of the host or of a priest who had just celebrated Mass would produce in her the same effects as food. Blessed Angela of Foligno passed twelve years with no food other than the Eucharist, which had a special flavor which was so delicious that there was nothing to which she could compare it. Lastly, St. Rose of Lima also experienced this same thing in her life. On entering the church, she would be so weak that she could hardly stand, but after Communion she would become resplendent and appear like an angel. She would be so invigorated by the Eucharist that she could return home with an agile pace.

02 Our Lord said to St. Catherine of Siena, "1 shall give thee My supernatural light which will enable thee to see the beauty or ugliness of the souls that you meet. Thy interior senses will perceive the state of these souls, just as thy external senses can perceive the condition of their bodies. And this will be so not only with the people with whom thou dost actually come in contact, but with all those whose salvation is the object of thy solicitude and prayers, though they be absent from thee or thou hast never seen them."

83 Weiss, *Apologie,* V, 466: "The lives of the saints are filled with such things. Everything holy, every place or object that has been in contact with sanctity, appears to them illumined with a light so resplendent that by comparison the sun itself is obscure. . . . On entering a church they sense immediately the exact spot where the Eucharist is reserved. . . . They distinguish holy water from that which is not blessed, just as easily as we can distinguish water from wine. They know which host is consecrated and which is not; they can identify true relics and they can tell whether the remains in a tomb are of one who is among the elect of God or of one who is not now in the bosom of the Father. They can sense whetloi .l person is in the state of grace, whether there are hidden sins on his soul, or whethri the sins have been taken away by the sacrament of penance. (See the niuiiv ‹▮..llll pics in Gôrres, *Mistica,* II, 83-105; St. Brigid's *Revelations,* pp. ή, 87; Life ol ▮ Catherine of Siena by Blessed Raymond; Catherine Emmerich, Life, ch·.)"

when they once more descend to where they were, they seem to hear the soft brushing of angels' wings.[94] So far as they have restored order and returned to their original state, these souls recover control over nature. They calm the elements, they subdue wild beasts and even bring them into their service and, finally, they exert a boundless influence on souls.

They arc so enriched with the power of their beloved Savior and they bear so faithful a copy of I lis image that this likeness sometimes is manifested in their countenance and their whole appearance. The contemporaries of St. Dominic and those of St. Francis de Sales were amazed to see in them the living image of our Lord. It was once said about St. Catherine of Siena, "Is it she or is it Jesus Christ?" so much did she resemble Him. So great was the power, serenity, and majesty of this wonderful saint that it is not surprising that when an impassioned crowd of Florentines sought to kill her, they lost their ferocity as soon as they saw her. Instead of hatred, there were respect and veneration.

Nature itself, instead of perishing as a result of the difficult trials to which it is subjected, comes forth the gainer, for it becomes purified and regenerated in the likeness of what it was in the days of its innocence. Therefore, when the great friends of God come forth as living copies of the divine Model, each one retains his individual character, for instead of losing their personal qualities, these individual notes are enriched through sanctification.[95] Who

[94] While in this state of suspension in the air, the saints are moved by the slightest breeze, like the lightest feather. It sometimes blows them to a great distance, as happened in the case of Venerable Mary Agreda and many other mystics. At other times they are lifted to inaccessible heights. "When I was charged with the duty of sacristan," writes Catherine Emmerich, "I felt myself suddenly transported. I rose to the highest point of the church, above the cornices, facade, and framework of the structure to which it seemed humanly impossible to climb. I cleaned and arranged everything there, and it seemed to me that good spirits elevated and sustained me." The same thing happened to St. Magdalen of Pazzi. Father Weiss states (*Apologie,* Vol. X, chap. 25): "We should not be surprised that Christina Mirabilis and St. Joseph of Cumpertino were able to rest like birds on the very tip of a tree or walk upon the waters; that St. Raymond of Pennafort could cross the sea on his cappa; that St. Catherine of Siena scarcely touched the stairs when she ascended or descended or that during her ecstasies she rested upon a basket of eggs without breaking them; that Blessed Amadeus passed rapidly over the snow without leaving any traces. No, one should not be amazed at these things if he remembers that in these souls lived the Spirit of Him who not only walked on the waves, but exempted St. Peter from the law of gravity and supported him on the waters."

[95] Weiss, *op. cit.,* Vol. X, chap. 24: "In the life of each saint we sec shine forth as in a mirror the character of the people to which that saint belongs, just as we

does not admire the delicacy of feeling and the peculiarly Italian nicety of St. Catherine of Siena? In her great fondness for children and flowers, she never tired of embracing and fondling children whom she happened to meet in the streets, however dirty they may have been, and she always cultivated her own little garden. Of the exquisite sentiments of St. Teresa of Avila we need not speak, for everyone knows and admires them. Who does not see in this glorious heroine a model of perfect Spanish womanhood? Who can help but see the Spanish woman there transfigured by grace? Only the saints can be perfect men and truly great men because in them alone is nature restored to its primitive integrity. They alone realize in themselves the Creator's idea at the same time that they are configured to the image of the Word.[80]

APPENDIX

i. Comparison Between the Spiritual Marriage and the Mystical Espousal

Interior Castle, seventh mansions, chap. 2:

There is the same difference between the Spiritual Betrothal and the Spiritual Marriage as there is between two betrothed persons and two who are united so that they cannot be separated any more.

As I have already said, one makes these comparisons because there are no other appropriate ones, yet it must be realized that the Betrothal has no more to do with the body than if the soul were not in the body, and were nothing but spirit. Between the Spiritual Marriage and the body

can sec reflected in the lakes of a country the color of its sky and the shape of its mountains."

Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* Book II, chap. 4, section 5: "Only grace can impress this supernatural character, which is appropriate to, and adopts itself to each person. This is never learnt from books . . . but ... is the effect of a special inspiration."

00 There is a notable difference between the true greatness of the saints and that of those who are esteemed as great. The latter appear great only from afar, but the saints are great both near and far. "Though he may be great in the estimation of the multitude and of those who witness only the exterior results of his labors, the great man is often petty in the eyes of those who are nearest him and who see the weaknesses of his character. . . . But the saint is holiest of all in the eyes of those who live with him and who are witnesses to his hidden virtues, his unknown tenderness, his valor before God, and his secret influence over souls. The saint is charged to confuse the ignorance and dissipate the prejudices of those who disdain him" (Joly, *Psych, des saints,* chap. 1).

there is even less connection, for this secret union takes place in the deepest centre of the soul, which must be where God Himself dw'ells, and I do not think there is any need of a door by which to enter it. . . . This instantaneous communication of God to the soul is so great a secret and so sublime a favour, and such delight is felt by the soul, that I do not know with what to compare it, beyond saying that the Lord is pleased to manifest to the soul at that moment the glory that is in Heaven, in a sublimer manner than is possible through any vision or spiritual consolation. It is impossible to say more than that, as far as one can understand, the soul (I mean the spirit of this soul) is made one with God, Who, being likewise a Spirit, has been pleased to reveal the love that He has for us by showing to certain persons the extent of that love, so that we may praise His greatness. For He has been pleased to unite Himself with His creature in such a way that they have become like two who cannot be separated from one another: even so He will not separate Himself from her.

The Spiritual Betrothal is different: here the two persons are frequently separated, as is the case with union, for, although by union is meant the joining of two things into one, each of the two, as is a matter of common observation, can be separated and remain a thing by itself. This favour of the Lord passes quickly, and afterwards the soul is deprived of that companionship—I mean so far as it can understand. In this other favour of the Lord it is not so: the soul remains all the time in that centre with its God. We might say that union is as if the ends of two wax candles were joined so that the light they give is one: the wicks and the wax and the light are all one; yet afterwards the one candle can be perfectly well separated from the other and the candles become two again, or the wick may be withdrawn from the wax. But here it is like rain falling from the heavens into a river or a spring; there is nothing but water there and it is impossible to divide or separate the water belonging to the river from that which fell from the heavens. Or it is as if a tiny streamlet enters the sea, from which it will find no way of separating itself, or as if in a room there were two large windows through which the light streamed in: it enters in different places but it all becomes one.

Perhaps when St. Paul says: "He who is joined to God becomes one spirit with Him" (I Cor. *6:*17) he is referring to this sovereign Marriage, which presupposes the entrance of His Majesty into the soul by union. And he also says: *"Mihi vivere Christus est, mori lucrum"* (Phil. 1:21: "For to me, to live is Christ; and to die is gain"). This, I think, the soul may say here, for it is here that the little butterfly to which we have re-

ferred dies, and with the greatest joy, because Christ is now its life.

This, with the passage of time, becomes more evident through its effects; for the soul clearly understands, by certain secret aspirations, that it is endowed with life by God. Very often these aspirations are so vehement that what they teach cannot possibly be doubted: though they cannot be described, the soul experiences them very forcibly. One can only say that this feeling is produced at times by certain delectable words which, it seems, the soul cannot help uttering, such as: "O life of my life, and sustenance that sustaineth me!" and things of that kind. . . . It becomes evident that there is someone in the interior of the soul who sends forth these arrows and thus gives life to this life, and that there is a sun whence this great light proceeds, which is transmitted to the faculties in the interior part of the soul. The soul, as I have said, neither moves from that centre nor loses its peace, for He who gave His peace to the Apostles when they were all together can give peace to the soul.

"The Bride has entered into the pleasant garden of her desire,
And at her pleasure rests, her neck reclining on the gentle arms of the Beloved" (*Spiritual Canticle,* st. 22).

In explaining this stanza of the *Canticle,* St. John of the Cross writes:

The soul does not come to this garden of complete transformation (which is the joy and delight and glory of the Spiritual Marriage) without first passing through the Spiritual Betrothal and through the mutual and loyal love of those that are betrothed. For, after the soul has been for some time the Bride of the Son of God, in love which is sweet and perfect, God calls her and sets her in this His flowering garden for the consummation of this most happy estate of marriage with Him, wherein is effected such union of the two natures and such communication of the Divine nature to the human, that, while neither of them changes its being, each of them appears to be God.

For the whole desire and aim of the soul, and that of God in all the works of the soul, is the consummation and perfection of this estate, wherefore the soul never rests until she reaches Him; for in this estate she finds much greater abundance and fullness of God, and a peace more sure and stable, and a sweetness more perfect without compare than in the Spiritual Betrothal, since she is now placed in the arms of such a Spouse, Whose close spiritual embrace the soul habitually feels—a true embrace, by means whereof the soul lives the life of God.

2. Intimate Communications

Interior Castle, seventh mansions, chap, i:

Our good God now desires to remove the scales from the eyes of the soul, so that it may see and understand something of the favour which He is granting it, although He is doing this in a strange manner. It is brought into this .Mansion by means of an intellectual vision, in which, by the representation of the truth in a particular way, the Most Holy Trinity reveals Itself, in all three Persons. First of all the spirit becomes enkindled and is illumined, as it were, by a cloud of the greatest brightness. It sees these three Persons, individually, and yet, by a wonderful kind of knowledge which is given to it, the soul realizes that most certainly and truly all these three Persons are one Substance and one Power and one Knowledge and one God alone; so that what we hold by faith the soul may be said here to grasp by sight, although nothing is seen by the eyes, either of the body or of the soul, for it is no imaginary vision. Here all three Persons communicate Themselves to the soul and speak to the soul and explain to it those words which the Gospel attributes to the Lord—namely, that He and the Father and the Holy Spirit will come to dwell with the soul which loves Him and keeps His commandments.

Oh, God help me! What a difference there is between hearing and believing these words and being led in this way to realize how true they are! Each dav this soul wonders more, for she feels that they have never left her, and perceives quite clearly, in the way I have described, that they are in the interior of her heart—in the most interior place of all and in its greatest depths. So although, not being a learned person, she cannot say how this is, she feels within herself this Divine companionship.

This may lead you to think that such a person will not remain in possession of her senses but will be so completely absorbed that she will be able to fix her mind upon nothing. But no: in all that belongs to the service of God she is more alert than before; and, when not otherwise occupied, she rests in that happy companionship. Unless her soul fails God, He will never fail, I believe, to give her the most certain assurance of His Presence. She has great confidence that God will not leave her, and that, having granted her this favour, He will not allow her to lose it.

The person already referred to found herself better in every way; however numerous were her trials and business worries, the essential part of her soul seemed never to move from that dwelling-place. So in a sense she felt that her soul was divided; and when she was going through great trials, shortly after God had granted her this favour, she complained of her soul, just as Martha complained of Mary. Sometimes she would say

that it was doing nothing but enjoying itself in that quietness, while she herself was left with all her trials and occupations so that she could not keep it company.

You will think this absurd, daughters, but it is what actually happens. Although of course the soul is not really divided, what I have said is not fancy, but a very common experience. As I was saying, it is possible to make observations concerning interior matters and in this way we know that there is some kind of difference, and a very definite one, between the soul and the spirit, although they are both one. So subtle is the division perceptible between them that sometimes the operation of the one seems as different from that of the other as are the respective joys that the Lord is pleased to give them.

3. The Habitual State of Perfect Souls

Blessed Henry Suso asks (*Eternal Wisdom*, chap. 33) how the just man who has abandoned himself to God should live among men, and the eternal Wisdom answers:

The just man is dead to self, to his defects, and to all created things. He is humble in his dealings with all and he gladly places himself beneath his fellow-men. In the abyss of the Divinity he understands what he ought to do and he accepts all things as they are and as God wishes. He is free under the law because he fulfills My will through love, without fear or apprehension. . . . His whole activity consists in total abandonment of self to God. . . . Working in this way, he rests in God and thus he works in a marvelous manner because that abandonment is a perfect act of love and virtue. He lives familiarly with all, without retaining the image or remembrance of anyone. He loves them without attachment and he comforts them in their trials without anxiety or uneasiness. . . . His prayer is most efficacious because it comes from the spirit. He carefully examines his interior to see whether there is there any obstacle of attachment or self-interest which weans him from God. Alienating himself from everything and ridding his senses of every human concept and attachment, he offers pure prayers, forgetful of self and thinking only of the glory of God and the salvation of souls. All his higher faculties are filled with a divine light which testify that God is his life, his being, and his entire good; that God works in him and that he is only God's instrument, adorer, and cooperator. As to external practices, he eats, sleeps, and takes care of the necessities of life as do other men, but interiorly, he neither eats, nor sleeps, nor bothers with the needs of his body. . . . He speaks but little and that with all simplicity; his conversation is always

kind and whatever he says proceeds from him without asperity. His senses remain calm and peaceful. . . . When they weaken, these souls have opinions just as other men do, but when they are raised above self to God, who is the supreme Truth, they live in the plenitude of knowledge and can never be deceived for then they appropriate nothing to themselves nor arrogate to self what comes from God. . . . As long as they do not completely divest themselves of self, they experience the torment of the possession of self; . . . but he who is not concerned with self, but remains entirely abandoned to God, enjoys a life that is tranquil and unchangeable. One does not arrive at these hidden truths by studying and asking questions, but only by abandoning himself in all humility to God.

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* II, chap. 19:

The fervent man wants nothing, knows nothing, desires nothing. Not desiring anything, he desires all things; not knowing anything, he knows all things. . . . He finds God in all things, and in all things he sees a means of being united to God. All men seem to him good and holy, and he deems them to be far more just and perfect than himself. He pities their mistakes; he carefully avoids their defects. I le loves solitude, but he takes pleasure in the crowd when it is assembled for holy exercises. He endures injuries patiently and he sweetens bitterness by his meekness and goodness.

Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 37:

If a person could have the wisdom to know these friends of God, to be familiar with them, and to fulfill perfectly whatever they ask or command, with what sanity and sanctity he would live! When they ask anything of God, they acquire it with little effort. But no one knows them well but those who arc like to them. . . . Certainly they are not known by those whose hearts arc weighed down with earthly things. Whatever they have and arc is deeply hidden in the depth of their souls, and for that reason the exterior man cannot penetrate them. . . . Their sanctity raises them above every form and fantasy. . . . These souls have no exercise or manner of acting which is singular, and for that reason those who follow singular methods do not recognize these holy souls and they repute them as unworthy men. Finally, their exercises surpass any explanation by words, and those who strive to measure their lives by their speech are ordinarily very much deceived. . . . But though these friends of God are unknown and disdained by the world, they see and know the world very well. They know full well to what vices and sins

it is subject and what a horrible judgment threatens the world if it is not converted and does not abandon its evil ways. All this is a source of greatest distress for the friends of God, and there is nothing that afflicts them more. They are always attentive to the present moment and they do not look to the past with an unwarranted solicitude nor are they unduly occupied with the future. They see God in all things, both great and small, and they do not live under the law in servile fear, for what other men do through the constraint of obedience, these souls do through pure love of God by a spontaneous resignation and that more humbly and with greater security. . . . Their every action is a continual resignation and in their work they remain interiorly detached and free to attend ceaselessly to God. They associate with the rest of men without any impression being made in their minds; they love the rest of men without any undue affection or attachment; and they pity the rest of men without any anxiety or disquiet.

Then a certain light is infused into the higher faculties by which they are instructed that God is their essence, life, and operation and that they are merely the adorers of that solemn Majesty. Outwardly they eat and sleep and drink, but according to their interior aspirations it is as if they did none of these things for they eat and drink and sleep only for the glory of God. For God they do all things. They apply themselves to few methods or external exercises; they use few words, and these are measured and simple. In their conversation they seek absolute honesty. . . . But all these friends of God do not live the same kind of life. Some live according to one type of life and others according to another. . . . Yet all of them persevere in the same essential profundity and interior depth and if, while they were in themselves, they had any opinions or ideas of their own, when they passed over to God they abandoned all opinion for now they know the truth with certitude and they take nothing at all as belonging to themselves.

4. The Life of the Soul in the Spiritual Marriage

Interior Castle, seventh mansions, chap. 3:

As we are saying, then, this little butterfly has now died, full of joy at having found rest, and within her lives Christ. Let us see what her new life is like, and how different it is from her earlier one, for it is by the effects which result from this prayer that we shall know if what has been said is true. As far as I can understand, the effects are these.

First, there is a self-forgetfulness which is so complete that it really seems as though the soul no longer existed, because it is such that she ha·.

neither knowledge nor remembrance that there is either heaven or life or honour for her, so entirely is she employed in seeking the honour of God. It appears that the words which His Majesty addressed to her have produced their effect—namely, that she must take care of His business and He will take care of hers. And thus, happen what may, she does not mind in the least, but lives in so strange a state of forgetfulness that, as I say, she seems no longer to exist, and has no desire to exist—no, absolutely none—save when she realizes that she can do something to advance the glory and honour of God, for which she would gladly lay down her life.

Do not understand by this, daughters, that she neglects to eat and sleep (though having to do this is no little torment to her), or to do anything which is made incumbent on her by her profession. We are talking of interior matters: as regards exterior ones there is little to be said. Her great grief is to see that all she can do of her own strength is as nothing. Anything that she is capable of doing and knows to be of service to Our Lord she would not fail to do for any reason upon earth.

The second effect produced is a great desire to suffer, but this is not of such a kind as to disturb the soul, as it did previously. So extreme is her longing for the will of God to be done in her that whatever His Majesty does she considers to be for the best: if He wills that she should suffer, well and good; if not, she does not worry herself to death as she did before.

When these souls are persecuted again, they have a great interior joy, and much more peace than in the state described above. They bear no enmity to those who ill-treat them, or desire to do so. Indeed they conceive a special love for them, so that, if they see them in some trouble, they are deeply grieved and would do anything possible to relieve them; they love to commend them to God, and they would rejoice at not being given some of the favours which His Majesty bestows upon them if their enemies might have them instead and thus be prevented from offending Our Lord.

What surprises me most is this. You have already seen what trials and afflictions these souls have suffered because of their desire to die and thus to enjoy Our Lord. They have now an equally strong desire to serve Him, and to sing His praise, and to help some soul if they can. So what they desire now is not merely not to die but to live for a great many years and to suffer the severest trials, if by so doing they can become the means whereby the Lord is praised, even in the smallest thing. If they knew for certain that, on leaving the body, they would have fruition of God, their attitude would not be affected, nor is it altered when they think of the glory which belongs to the saints, for they do not desire as yet to attain

this. Their conception of glory is of being able in some way to help the Crucified, especially when they see how often people offend Him and how few there are who really care about His honour and are detached from everything else.

True, they sometimes forget this, turn with tender longing to the thought of enjoying God and desire to escape from this exile, especially when they see how little they are doing to serve Him. But then they turn back and look within themselves and remember that they have Him with them continually: and they are content with this and offer His Majesty their will to live as the most costly oblation they can give Him. They are no more afraid of death than they would be of a gentle rapture. The explanation of this is that it is He who gave the soul those earlier desires, accompanied by such excessive torment, that now it gives it these others.

In short, the desires of these souls are no longer for consolations or favours, for they have with them the Lord Himself and it is His Majesty Who now lives in them. His life, of course, was nothing but a continual torment and so He is making our life the same, at least as far as our desires go. In other respects, He treats us as weaklings, though He has ample fortitude to give us when He sees that we need it. These souls have a marked detachment from everything and a desire to be always either alone or busy with something that is to some soul's advantage. They have no aridities or interior trials but a remembrance of Our Lord and a tender love for Him, so that they would like never to be doing anything but giving Him praise. When the soul is negligent, the Lord Himself awakens it in the way that has been described, so that it sees quite clearly that this impulse, or whatever it is called, proceeds from the interior of the soul.

The difference between this Mansion and the rest has already been explained. There are hardly any periods of aridity or interior disturbance in it which at one time or another have occurred in all the rest, but the soul is almost always in tranquillity. It is not afraid that this sublime favour may be counterfeited by the devil but retains the unwavering certainty that it comes from God.

So tranquilly and noiselessly does the Lord teach the soul in this state and do it good that I am reminded of the building of Solomon's temple, during which no noise could be heard; just so, in this temple of God, in this Mansion of His, He and the soul alone have fruition of each other in the deepest silence. There is no reason now for the understanding to stir, or to seek out anything, for the Lord Who created the soul is now pleased to calm it and would have it look, as it were, through a little chink, nt what is passing. Now and then it loses sight of it and is unable to see any thing; but this is only for a very brief time. The faculties, I think, mt

not lost here; it is merely that they do not work but seem to be dazed.

And I am quite dazed myself when I observe that, on reaching this state, the soul has no more raptures . . . save very occasionally, and even then it has not the same transports and flights of the spirit. These raptures, too, happen only rarely, and hardly ever in public as they very often did before. Nor have they any connection, as they had before, with great occasions of devotion; if we see a devotional image or hear a sermon, it is almost as if we had heard nothing, and it is the same with music. Previously, the poor little butterfly was always so worried that everything frightened her and made her fly away. But it is not so now, whether because she has found her rest, or because the soul has seen so much in this Mansion that it can be frightened at nothing, or because it no longer has that solitude which it was wont to have, now that it is enjoying such companionship.

5. Conditions and Signs of the Spiritual Marriage

Since it is usually difficult to distinguish the habitual state of the spiritual marriage from some of the phases preceding it, we think it advisable to list the following indications whereby the mystical marriage can be identified. These things were written by an unlettered mystic who by 1907 had already spent three years in that blessed state of marriage.

Conditions for spiritual marriage: "First, that the soul be called to it by God; secondly, that the soul work without ceasing, by all the means at its disposal, to achieve as soon as possibe the death of all its appetites . . . and all its passions. When this has been accomplished, the soul should root out all self-will and private judgment until it dies to self in all things. For unless it dies to all things, it can never attain intimate friendship with the most tender of all lovers. . . . Our Lord, enamored of souls, will celebrate the nuptials with no soul in this life until that soul has died to all things—to things and creatures, whether of heaven or of earth, and to all its appetites. . . . This jealous Lord cannot tolerate any affection for created things in the heart of His beloved. So much does He desire this to be so that He wills that they have no attachment even for sanctity itself and He expressly forbids it. . . .[87] He does not cele-

87 St. Francis de Sales, *The Love of God,* Bk. IX, chap. 16: "The same God who makes us desire virtues, takes from us the affection for virtues and spiritual exercises so that with more tranquillity, purity, and simplicity we may desire nothing but

brate the nuptials with any creature if He sees that it has not yet acquired the habit of all that has just been stated; for in the question of love, He will not tolerate the slightest attachment. It is His dominant passion to be the sole object of all the affections of the heart and soul of the one He has chosen for His bride. When all this has been done and when the habit has been acquired, the nuptials are celebrated.

"Signs accompanying the celebration of the marriage: First, the entire Blessed Trinity dwells in the soul as on its throne; secondly, the soul experiences a divine transformation which leaves it entirely deified and it feels . . . that the purification and transformation which are experienced leave the soul impeccable, as it were. By means of the secret knowledge which is imparted to the soul at that time, it clearly understands that what it is experiencing, tasting, and feeling is an anticipated joy of the happiness of heaven. This is the most certain sign of the actuality of the marriage. Thirdly, the soul feels that it is continually nourished and enraptured by wisdom and love, and there are infused into the depth of the soul certain secrets of knowledge of our holy religion and the divinity and nature of God. Now the soul is no longer burned or wounded as it was in the espousal . . . but there arc divine touches which neither burn nor wound, but only deify.

"In the spiritual marriage the soul sees clearly that He who gives it those intimacies which it receives from God is the Holy Ghost, its only Master. . . . The soul never gives Him any other name. . . . In the secrecy and solitude of the heart wherein He dwells, the soul breaks into tears of tenderness and calls Him, 'My Master! My Master!' "

Actually, that simple intuition brings with it a clear idea of the divine attributes, of what is proper to each of the three divine persons, of the creation and fall of the angels and man, and of the entire marvelous process of our restoration, justification, adoption, and deification through the blood of the incarnate Word.

His divine pleasure. . . . The spouse of the Savior, out of love for Him, has despoiled herself of her former affection for spiritual consolations, exercises of devo tion, the practice of the virtues, and even for her own advancement in perfection . . . loving all these things . . . only because the Savior's name is sanctified in them, His kingdom enriched, and His good pleasure glorified."

6. Transformation of the Soul in the Three Divine Persons

The Spiritual Canticle, stanza 39:

This breathing of the air is a property which the soul says that God will give her there, in the communication of the Holy Spirit, Who, as one that breathes, raises the soul most sublimely with that His Divine breath, and informs and habilitates her, that she may breathe in God the same breath of love that the Father breathes in the Son and the Son in the Father, which is the same Holy Spirit that God breathes into the soul in the Father and the Son, in the said transformation, in order to unite her with Himself. For it would not be a true and total transformation if the soul were not transformed in the three Persons of the Holy Spirit, in a clearly revealed and manifest degree. And this said aspiration of the Holy Spirit in the soul, whereby God transforms her into Himself, is so sublime and delicate and profound a delight to her that it cannot be described by mortal tongue, nor can human understanding as such attain to any conception of it. For even that which passed in the soul with respect to this communication in this temporal transformation cannot be described, because the soul united and transformed in God breathes in God into God the same Divine breath that God, when she is transformed in Him, breathes into her in Himself.

And there is no need to consider it impossible that the soul should be capable of aught so high as to breathe in God as God breathes in her after a mode of participation. For since God grants her the favour of uniting her in the most Holy Trinity, wherein she becomes deiform and God by participation, how is it a thing incredible that she should also perform her work of understanding, knowledge and love—or, rather, should have it performed in the Trinity, together with It, like the Trinity Itself. This, however, comes to pass by a mode of communication and participation, which God effects in the soul herself; for this is to be transformed in the three Persons, in power and wisdom and love; and herein the soul is like to God, for it was to the end that she might come to this that He created her in His image and likeness.

And how this comes to pass cannot be known, nor is it possible to express it, save by describing how the Son of God obtained for us this high estate and granted us to merit this sublime office, of being able to become sons of God, as says S. John (1:12). And thus He prayed to the Father, as says the same S. John, saying: Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given me be also with Me where I am, that they may see the brightness which Thou gavest me (17:24). That is to say, that they may work in Us by participation the same work which I do by nature, namely, may

breathe the Holy Spirit. And He says further: I pray not, Father, only for these that are present, but likewise for those who shall believe in Me through their teaching, that they may all be one and the same thing; so that as Thou, Father, art in Me and I am in Thee, even so may they be one and the same thing in Us; and I have given them the brightness which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one and the same thing, as We are one and the same thing; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me; namely, by communicating to them the same love as to the Son, though not naturally as to the Son, but, as we have said, by unity and transformation of love.

Wherefore souls possess these same blessings by participation as He possesses by nature; for which cause they ire truly gods by participation, equals of God and His companions. Wherefore S. Peter said: Grace and peace be complete and perfect in you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as all things are given to us of His divine virtue for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us with His own glory and virtue; whereby He has given unto us many great and precious promises, that by these things we may be made companions of the Divine nature (i, 2-4). Thus far are the words of S. Peter, wherein it is clearly signified that the soul will have participation in God Himself, and that it will be performing in Him, in company with Him, the work of the Most Holy Trinity, after the manner whereof we have spoken by reason of the substantial union between the soul and God.

O souls created for these grandeurs and called thereto! What do ye do? Wherein do ye occupy yourselves?

7. How These Souls Glorify God

The Living Flame, stanza 3:

For now that these caverns of the faculties are so wonderful, and so marvelously infused with the wondrous splendours of those lamps, which, as we have said, are burning within them, they are sending back to God in God, over and above the surrender of themselves which they are making to God, since they are illumined and enkindled in God, those same splendours which the soul has received with loving glory; they turn to God in God, and become themselves lamps enkindled in the splendours of the Divine lamps, giving to the Beloved the same light and heat of love that they receive; for in this state, after the same manner as they receive, they are giving to Him that receives and has given with the very brightness that He gives to them.

The brightness with which God visits the soul is like to the brightness wherewith the understanding receives Divine wisdom and is made one with the understanding of God; for one cannot give save in the way wherein is given to him. And like to the brightness wherewith the will is united in goodness is the brightness wherewith the soul gives to God in God the same goodness; for the soul receives it only to give it again. . . . According to the brightness of the other Divine attributes which are here communicated to the soul—fortitude, beauty, justice, etc.—are the manners of brightness wherewith the sense, having fruition, is giving to its Beloved, in its Beloved—that is to say, giving that same light and heat that it is receiving from its Beloved; for, since in this state it has been made one and the same thing with Him, it is after a certain manner God by participation; for, although this is not so as perfectly as in the next life, the soul is, as we have said, as it were a shadow of God. And in this way, since the soul, by means of this substantial transformation, is the shadow of God, it does in God and through God that which He does through Himself in the soul, in the same way as He does it; for the will of these two is one and thus the operation of God and that of the soul are one. Therefore, even as God is giving Himself to the soul with free and gracious will, even so likewise the soul, having a will that is the freer and the more generous in proportion as it has a greater degree of union with God, is giving God in God to God Himself, and thus the gift of the soul to God is true and entire. For in this state the soul secs that God truly belongs to it, and that it possesses Him with hereditary possession, with rightful ownership, as an adopted child of God, through the grace that God gave to it, and it sees that, since He belongs to it, it may give and communicate Him to whomsoever it desires of its own will; and thus it gives Him to its Beloved, Who is the very God that gave Himself to it. And herein the soul pays God all that it owes Him; inasmuch as, of its own will, it gives as much as it has received of Him.

And since, in making this gift to God, it gives it to the Holy Spirit, with voluntary surrender, as that which is His own, that He may love Flimself therein as He merits, the soul has inestimable delight and fruition, for it sees that it is giving to God that which is His own and which becomes Him according to His infinite Being. For, although it is true that the soul cannot give God Himself to Himself anew, since He in Himself is ever Himself, yet, in so far as the soul is itself concerned, it gives perfectly and truly, giving all that He had given to it, to pay the debt of love. And this is to give as he has been given to it, and God is repaid by that gift of the soul—yet with less than this He cannot be paid. And this He takes with gratitude, as something belonging to the soul that it gives to Him,

and in that same gift He also loves the soul as it were anew, and so at this time there is formed between God and the soul a reciprocal love in the agreement of the union and surrender of marriage, wherein the possessions of both, which are the Divine Essence, are possessed by each one freely, by reason of the voluntary surrender of the one to the other, and are possessed likewise by both together, wherein each says to the other that which the Son of God said to the Father in S. John, namely: *Omnia mea tua sunt, et tua mea sunt et clarificatus sum in eis* (17:10). That is: All My possessions are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

In this way, the deep caverns of sense, with strange brightness, give heat and light together to their Beloved. . . . The soul has three principal kinds of love which may be called brightnesses. The first is that the soul now loves God, not through itself, but through Flimself; which is a wondrous brightness, since it loves through the Holy Spirit, even as the Father and the Son love One Another, as the Son Himself says, in S. John: May the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me be in them and I in them (17:26).

CHAPTER VI

Diversity of the Ways of the Spirit

NOT all mystics pass through the same trials or suffer their trials with equal rigor or in the same order. These vary with the state and destiny of each soul: what must be purified in them and the degree of sanctity which they are to attain.

Purely contemplative souls are usually subjected especially to interior sufferings, such as aridity, obscurity, abandonment. Those who are at the same time engaged in the active life, and especially in the sacred ministry, are often subjected to exterior trials, such as the disturbance and labor that accompany the ministry, persecutions, calumnies, and a thousand other difficulties. Yet these trials are not sent for the obstruction of the work of the ministry, but rather to render it more fruitful.[1] God is able to give a certain facility for enduring these trials and sometimes He moderates the interior fire of the great impulses and longings of the spirit so that, however vehement they may be, they do not manifest themselves outwardly nor impede the fulfillment of one's duties.

Moreover, the child does not need the same purgations as does the adult; nor the innocent soul, that has no debts to satisfy nor vices to uproot, the same as the penitent, who is laden with debts and set in his evil habits. Neither is the same purity required to attain the prayer of simple union as is required for the state of the mystical espousal, and so on.

On the other hand, since God is the absolute Master of His gifts, He distributes them freely and according to His good pleasure. As a consequence no two mystics proceed in exactly the same way

[1] See Godinez, *Teologia Mistica,* III, chaps. 6-8.

or in the same order. Certain innocent souls, that reached the use of reason very early, were immediately elevated from childhood or infancy to the mystical espousal. Such was the case of the Venerable Micaela Aguirre, a seventeenth-century Dominican nun of Valladolid, Spain, who was raised to this lofty state at the age of five and whose various trials were intermingled with wonderful favors all her life.[2]

Certain sinners, such as St. Mary Magdalen, St. Paul, and St. Augustine, were raised to the heights of contemplation at one stroke, but at the same time they endured terrible purgations and were prepared for still greater ones. Thus, Magdalen suffered extremely during the Passion; the Apostle, before being baptized and receiving the Holy Ghost, passed three days in blindness, owing to the excessive light with which the Lord had manifested Himself. He was prostrate and spent all this time in prayer, neither eating nor drinking (Acts 22:11–16). He then realized how much he would have to

2 Having reached the age of reason, this holy Dominican clearly understood the troth which she had contracted with our Lord, for she said to Him, "All is Thine; use it for well or ill, it is all Thine." The Lord showed her a ring which she was to brighten for Him by her works and sufferings. The Child Jesus appeared to Blessed Osanna when she was five years of age, but He did not celebrate the mystical espousal with her until she was nineteen years old, although she lived in almost continual ecstasy. Following this espousal and the exchange of hearts which she experienced, Blessed Osanna spent seven years in terrible tribulations, with no other consolation, as she says, than the Cross.

A still more marvelous event took place in the case of Anna Catherine Emmerich, who received these favors at baptism. She herself says that she had the use of her faculties at that moment and that she knew what was going on around her. She was aware of these mystical ceremonies taking place in her, and at the time her eyes and heart were opened in an extraordinary manner. Immediately after baptism, she saw her guardian angel and her patrons, St. Anne and St. Catherine, who had assisted at the ceremony. She also saw the Mother of God with the Child Jesus, and the Mother espoused her to Jesus and gave her the nuptial ring. From then on she was able to distinguish immediately anything that was holy or blessed and whatever belonged to the Church. She received profound and mysterious images which enabled her to understand the nature of the Church. She felt God's presence upon the altar and saw the relics of the saints radiant with a celestial light. Lastly, she saw all the dangers to which she would be exposed during her whole life.

Mother Dominic Clara of the Cross (1832-95), foundress of the Dominican Convent at Luxemburg, relates these same things about herself. An almost identical occurrence took place in the life of Blessed Catherine de Racconigi. When she was only five years old, the Blessed Virgin appeared with the Child Jesus and said: "From this hour I unite thee to my Son in faith, hope, and charity." The divine Child added: "I espouse her gladly, for she is a precious pearl which I have acquired through My blood." When the same Blessed Catherine was three years old, the Holy Ghost said to her, "I come to dwell in thee, to purify thee, illumine thee, inflame thy heart, and give thee life."

suffer all his life for God's holy name, and for three years he retired to Arabia to prepare himself for his ministry.[3]

Of the few souls that finally arrive at the sublime state of spiritual marriage, most of them pass through the terrible night of the spirit long after they have passed through the night of the senses, although some suffer both purgations almost simultaneously.[4] Each of these states may be more or less constant and may last until there comes a long period of relative calm, filled with light and consolation, with few absences, desolations, and aridities. However, there may be exterior works and trials, together with painful and delightful flights of the spirit, ardent longings, and wounds of love. More often the periods of purgation are interrupted and interspersed with great favors and consolations which strengthen and animate the soul to return to its trials and make the trials themselves more bearable. Consequently each increase in light and love and each partial degree of prayer is preceded by a new crisis of sufferings, absences, and obscurities wherein the love and fidelity of the soul are tested.[5]

St. Rose of Lima, after receiving the most signal favors, continued every day for fifteen years, even in the midst of sublime contemplation, to spend one or two hours in the obscurity of the night of the spirit. During these times she was oblivious to all things and she suffered a sort of hell, feeling that she was lost, rejected by God, and that no one would hear her sighs. Sometimes she was even unable to sigh in the midst of such torments. Yet always she remained completely resigned, saying: "Thy will be done, O Lord."[6]

The first phase of the night of the spirit, which is the painful annihilation caused by the excess of divine light, can begin even before

[3] Gal. 1:17 f.

[4] See *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap. 1.

[5] According to Cardinal Bona, who attempted to measure the time spent by the great contemplatives in these periods of desolation, obscurity, and the rest of the passive purgations, St. Francis of Assisi was in that condition for two years; St. Catherine of Bologna, five; St. Clara of Montefalco, fifteen; Father Baltasar Alvarez, sixteen; St. Teresa, eighteen; St. Magdalen of Pazzi, first a period of five years and then sixteen more. But these estimates are not very accurate for, as St. Teresa states, the passive purgations are mingled with consolations until the state of spiritual marriage is reached.

[6] For ten years St. Catherine of Genoa found herself in a veritable purgatory which was at once so terrible and so delightful that she suffered an unbearable sorrow together with an indescribable joy and in such a way that the one did not impede or lessen the other. A similar thing occurred during the last trance of Mother Mary of the Queen of the Apostles, at the end of her life.

the prayer of union is reached or may continue during the prayer of union, to make it more intimate and spiritual. It then grows stronger and stronger after the full conforming union and thus disposes the soul for the transformation it will need in the espousal.

The second phase of the night of the spirit, which is the contemplation *in caligine* (dark contemplation),[7] usually begins some time after the espousal and is prolonged and intensified as much as is necessary to cause the definitive mystical death and the complete renewal which is necessary for the spiritual marriage.

The various grades of contemplation are in reality numerous and difficult to distinguish because they occur in some souls imperceptibly [8] and also because they do not occur in exactly the same way nor in the same order in all souls nor does each soul remain firmly fixed in one state until it arrives at the higher one. For as soon as a soul arrives at a certain grade of contemplation, it is accustomed to retain in a general way something of the lower grades, according to the conditions and circumstances in which it finds itself.[8] Thus St. Teresa, on being obliged to describe such things,

7 See *Dark Night of the Soul,* Bk. II, chap. 5.

• Ribet, *Mystique,* I, 149: "Experience shows that contemplation, like natural operations, appears in a germinal state, is developed by means of sudden changes, and is completed by the supreme union with divine charity. Those who have observed souls under this mysterious working of grace have been able to verify these multiple and varied elevations which are as difficult to characterize as they are impossible to ignore. Therefore all mystics admit various successive states or grades of contemplation which are like so many steps to the consummation of love.

9 These diverse grades sometimes begin in a very remiss manner, and the transit from one to another is so insensible that many souls scarcely know how to distinguish between them until the new state of prayer is present to them in all its characteristic intensity. They will then see that their prayer is not now as it was before but they are unable to account for what is happening to them until the communication from God is more complete. It is when they arrive at a higher degree of prayer that they are able to distinguish well the lower grades. So it is that St. Teresa could recognize that when she was younger (at about twenty years of age) she had possessed briefly and without realizing it at the time, the prayer of recollection and the prayer of quiet (*Life,* chap. 4). But when her fervor slackened, she had to wait another twenty years before she was able to possess those states of prayer habitually. At the age of forty-three she enjoyed the ecstatic union and then she began to have locutions (*ibid.,* chap. 24).

The Venerable Sister Barbara of St. Dominic, O.P., within the space of two years passed from the night of the senses to that of the spirit almost insensibly, running through all the steps of the mystical ladder very rapidly. In July of 1868 she found herself in the most terrible of purgations of the senses, and these were prolonged excessively, making her suffer indescribable torments. But in December of that same year, amid the most violent temptations, she obtained the true prayer of recollection together with something of the prayer of quiet. She herself describes

experienced all of them anew, successively, according as it was necessary for her to write about them. It was in this way that she was able to describe them with such remarkable accuracy, for she had to do nothing but declare what she had just experienced. Often she experienced these things while holding the pen in her hand, and by a special grace she was able to express such things.[10]

The Grades of Contemplation

Scaramelli distinguishes eleven grades of contemplation. Others admit even more: Blessed Angela of Foligno mentions the eighteen steps which she took to arrive at true knowledge of self [11] and, in a certain manuscript in which an unlettered soul gives an account of its state of prayer, we were able to count fifteen grades of prayer up to the wounds of love and ardent longings which follow the espousal.

Yet, although many or few may be enumerated, all the grades of contemplation can be reduced to the five fundamental or basic ones which we have already indicated: recollection, quiet, union, espousal, and spiritual marriage. The first three pertain to the simple

all this in these words: "I began to feel a very great peace in my soul, and my mind was so firmly fixed on my God that it seemed to be seeing Him. It seemed to me as if my heart would leave my breast, so great was the ardor which I felt. . . . It was a strange thing; for I was aware of all that took place, but I could not move myself and it seemed that I was rooted in God. But how beautiful and tender did He show Himself to me! . . . He took me in His arms to let me rest on His loving bosom, and it seems that I could hear Him say: 'Come, and rest on My heart.' I cannot now explain the joy that my heart felt. . . . All the former anxieties which I had experienced disappeared, and I was left in an unchanging peace." But later the trials returned to her with greater violence; in the midst of them, in November of 1869, she describes the prayer of quiet and, in July of 1871, the prayer of union. On the fourth of December she tells how Jesus Christ purified her heart and on the twenty-ninth she speaks of the espousal. Afterward, enjoying at intervals the above-mentioned grades of prayer and the ineffable consolations which they bring, she lived habitually in the night of the spirit and each week she suffered the series of the torments of Christ's passion until she was crucified in Him and exhaled her last breath on the eighteenth of November in 1872, at the age of thirty.

[10] *Life,* chap. 17: "For it is one favour that the Lord should grant this favour; but quite another to understand what favour and what grace it is; and still another to be able to describe and explain it."

[11] Although some of these things at the beginning of conversion seem to be simple asceticism, in reality there can be discerned from the first a certain motion of the Holy Ghost in them which gives them a mystical air. Actually the conversion begins with a holy fear; then comes filial confidence (the gift of piety), after which follows the movement of sorrow, tears, illustrations, and so forth.

conforming union, and the last two to the transforming union.[12] Between the last two grades there could be placed an intermediate grade, the dark contemplation, which implies a union more intimate, though more hidden, than that of the espousal, and during this dark contemplation the mystery of the transformation of the soul is gradually realized.[13] So there will also be three fundamental grades of the transforming union, as in the conforming union. Except in the case of extremely privileged souls, the five or six grades which result are passed through in regular order the first time and the soul tarries for a longer or lesser period in each one of them. Later it reaches a certain crisis in which, laboriously and at the cost of great sacrifice, it is prepared to ascend to the next grade unless the soul, through lack of direction or especially through lack of generosity, resolution, abnegation, and constancy in the prolonged obscurity, loses merit and falls back, as unfortunately happens often. For the conquest of the kingdom of God belongs only to the strong and ordinarily, because of human weakness, souls do not exert all the increasing efforts that God demands at each ascent to a higher

12 Ven. Mother Mary of the Incarnation, whom Bossuet calls the American St. Teresa, joins the prayer of recollection with that of the prayer of quiet, and the espousal with the spiritual marriage. Therefore she lists only three mystical states which, as we have seen, she describes with utmost precision. "In each of these states," she says, "there are various grades or operations to which the Holy Ghost elevates the soul according to His good pleasure."

Before the time of St. Teresa, who distinguished these successive states of contemplation with such sagacity, it was customary to single out other grades of contemplation which are quite distinct. But these grades are actually phenomena which are gradually effected in the various mystical states. For example, in the prayer of union, according to Ven. Bartholomew of the Martyrs (*Comp. Myst.,* chap. 26): "There are seven grades of contemplation: fire, unction, ecstasy, speculation, taste, quiet, and glory. First the soul is inflamed; once inflamed, it is anointed; once anointed, it is seized by ecstasy, it speculates or contemplates; contemplating, it tastes God; tasting God, it rests in Him. These grades are gradually reached by those who exercise themselves in spiritual things and they cannot be understood except by experience. . . . You must labor for a long time if you are to arrive at this happy condition. . . . But persevere and hold fast to God, and your hope will not be in vain."

13 The dark contemplation or vision is described as follows by Father John Sanz Lopez (*Comp, de la doctr. mist.,* Ill, no. 663): "It takes place when God infuses a light so brilliant that the soul cannot gaze on it, for it becomes blinded. Yet the soul realizes that God is within that inaccessible light, and from this there follows a loving impatience because the soul cannot see what is hidden there. It experiences an ardent desire to see the face of its Beloved and a confident hope that it will one day see His face disclosed. This contemplation is called *in caligine,* or in darkness, because the excess of light blinds the soul." After this obscurity comes the manifestation of God, who lets Himself be tasted by experience.

state.[14] Therefore Father Godinez does not hesitate to state that ninety-nine per cent vacillate, become dismayed, and fall back during the principal crises they meet and only one out of ten that are called merit the call to the new grade which God offers them.[15] The same thought is expressed in a work [16] attributed to Blessed Henry Suso; and St. Teresa says that there are comparatively many who arrive at the prayer of quiet but few who pass beyond it.[17]

From this it can be seen that true contemplatives are very rare. Although it is true that God does not immediately raise all pious souls to this state, it is also true that many souls could arrive at it, but through their own fault they do not. Either they do not willingly accept the first trials or they are dismayed and overcome later on. The chief cause, however, is, as we have already pointed out, the scarcity of capable spiritual directors who know how to correct self-deception and to encourage souls so that they will resolve to renounce self completely and to separate themselves from everything that is not God and even from undue attachment to divine favors, throwing themselves into His arms with an abandonment so absolute that they will think only of serving and pleasing Him, in being purified, and in following with all docility the motions of the Spirit. But without a good spiritual director, it is difficult to avoid the reefs of a subtle self-love which sometimes causes the soul to be shipwrecked or to lose a great part of the fruits of its labors.[18] Thus we see that even when a soul has generously renounced all mundane delights and has crucified its body with austere penances, it sometimes remains attached to its own honor and self-will or to the sensible pleasures which God communicates to it. And when it be-

11 Poulain, *Grâces d'oraison,* 45 f.: "All the other types of prayer which the mystics enumerate, such as silence, spiritual sleep, inebriation, jubilation, wounds of love, are nothing more than manifestations of these principal types and they do not constitute successive grades. . . . But the principal types, according to St. Teresa, are true grades which constitute spiritual ages, as it were. . . . A soul does not usually pass on to any one of them without having remained for some time in the one preceding, and the transit is difficult. That is why many souls stop along the way."

15 *Mist.,* VII, chap. 1.

16 *Dialogo de las Nueve Penas.*

17 *See Life,* chap. 15; *Interior Castle,* fifth mansions, chap. 1.

18 St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Sentences and Maxims,* no. 6: "He that desires to be alone, without the support of a master and guide, will be like the tree that is alone in the field and has no owner. However much fruit it bears, passers-by will pluck it all, and it will not mature."

gins to strip itself of all these affections, it still preserves other hidden affections for spiritual favors, divine lights, and communications. For, although it may believe itself indifferent to all things for fulfilling the pure will of God, it still becomes disquieted in its desolations and, under specious pretexts, it covets the divine gifts, thus showing that it does not seek God for Himself alone and apart from His gifts. If, moreover, the soul has the indiscretion to adhere to these favors in such a way that it feeds itself on them with a kind of spiritual gluttony,[19] as if its progress consisted in such things, it will then be in great danger of falling back instead of progressing, and it may even grow lax and, presuming on itself, will fall miserably. When such a fault is committed, God withdraws the lights and graces that He wishes the soul to use and not leave them sterile. Without these lights and graces the unhappy soul, instead of remaining firm in time of trial, is exposed to all manner of illusions and snares.[20]

Thus does the imprudence of many false mystics and deluded souls serve as a pretext to the slothful who use it as a means to cover up their own laxity and weakness and even to defame the faithful servants of God whose fervor confuses them. From the great heights of contemplation Blessed Henry Suso saw that some souls not only do not ascend there because of their secret attachment to divine favors, but that some of them appropriate these gifts to themselves and fall away or that they sometimes become filled with pride and become dogmatic in these matters. This is what happened to Molinos and the other quietists. St. Teresa says that she saw some souls fall who had been raised to the prayer of union.[21] Yet this does not justify the slothful who never fall from these heights for the simple reason that they have never ascended to them. They have never made any effort to ascend to them and they will not let themselves be uprooted from the earth. St. Teresa asserts that the worst fall is to depart from the path of prayer, which is the path of salvation.[22]

From this it can be seen how necessary are the distinct types of passive purgations to which God mercifully subjects His chosen

19 See *Dark Night,* Bk. I, chap. 6.

20 St. Catherine of Genoa held that spiritual attachments are even more dangerous than sensible attachments.

21 *Interior Castle,* fifth mansions, chap. 4.

22 *Life,* chap. 19.

ones in order to refine them like gold in the furnace, to give back to them the purity and simplicity of children, and to receive them as a pleasing holocaust.[23] For, since He is simplicity and purity itself, He cannot be perfectly united with souls that are not totally pure and simple. So we see that what appears to us as excessive severity is actually an excess of goodness and mercy. One can also now understand the necessity of the succession by which is realized the union through which souls are made to feel the divine touches, first in the understanding, later in the will, then in all the faculties, and finally in the very center of the soul. From this proceeds the ordered progress through the respective principal grades of prayer, although this does not prevent the method and details from varying with each person and that a soul, after ascending to a certain grade of prayer, will return to exercise the lower forms or even appeal to meditation when it does not find itself favored with any type of infused contemplation.[24] For the one thing essential to advancement is that each soul should conform to that which has been given it and should use it well, not remaining in a slothful state, contrary to the teaching of the quietists, but striving always to bring the divine gifts to fruition as well as it can. Sloth, as Tauler and Blosius say, is a most pestilential vice.

Even that holy sloth which is felt in the prayer of quiet and, indeed, whenever God works energetically in the soul and leaves it absorbed, is accompanied by a marvelous activity. This activity manifests itself without the soul's being aware of it and through it the soul strives to receive, follow, and second the divine impulse. The soul seems to be withdrawn from all occupation, absorbed and filled with light and energy, for the transports of love which it feels do not permit it to reflect or note its activity and working. This type of prayer is called passive because of the lack of initiative on the part of the soul and also because of the lack of discursus and reflection. Yet the passivity with which the soul accepts, follows, and seconds the divine action, by letting itself be led thereby in the best

23 Wisd. 3:9; Prov. 17:3; Ecclus. 2:5.

24 St. Teresa, *Life*, chap. 13: "For there is no state of prayer, however sublime, in which it is not necessary often to go back to the beginning." It usually happens, however, that there remains in the soul some form of infused prayer which will enable it to proceed in a way very superior to its former manner.

way possible, carries with it a remarkable activity.[26] For that reason, Blessed Nicholas Factor *(Joe. cit.')* states that "No mortal should think that the soul wastes time in that condition, for its work is divine."

Actually God does His work there, putting the final touch to the soul's purification and renewal, the crowning point of which, as St. Catherine of Genoa and Blessed Angela of Foligno point out, is similar to its beginning, since it is effected "in us without us." In this state we can contribute nothing more than complete acquiescence and trusting abandonment to the hands of the divine Artist.

Thus it will be seen how inferior must be the simple union of conformity with the divine will, which is able to take place in the ordinary ways, to that union which is divinely effected by means of infused contemplation. If it is certain, as St. Teresa seems to teach,[26] that we ought to strive to obtain the former type of union at any cost (since it is in our power by means of ordinary grace) and that we should leave it to God to confer on us the infused union when it suits His good pleasure, it is none the less certain that any union which we can attain by our own efforts is in no way comparable to that mystical quiet of the soul which Jesus Christ bestows on those who valiantly accept His sweet yoke.[27] Still less could any such union equal the fully infused union in which the divine Consoler captivates the faculties and fills them with His incomparable unction. From this point on nothing can be obtained through the ordinary ways, but the soul enters upon unknown regions where the sole director and guide must be the Holy Ghost.[28] Without feel-

26 Bossuet says that the mystical repose is not only "an act, but it is the most perfect of acts. Far from being inactivity, it places us totally in action by means of a divine activity."

Gratry, *Conaiss. de Dieu,* II, chap. 7: "Passive contemplation is a vigorous act of the spirit; a simple thought in which are contained, as far as is possible to human weakness, the infinite perfections of God."

Molina, *De la Oration,* chap. 7: "The potencies of the soul work in every type of prayer, knowing and loving God, even if that prayer is accompanied by ecstasies and raptures."

26 *Interior Castle,* fifth mansions, chap. 3: Actually, according to St. Teresa, the union of conformity to the divine will is not strictly ascetical, but ascetico-mystical, although it is not as supernatural a union as that which is entirely passive and accompanied by special favors.

27 Matt. 11:29.

28 Isa. 63:14.

ing His sweet touches and delicate motions, the soul would be unable to subject itself as it must in order to work in a divinely heroic manner where the mystical gifts intervene to perfect and complete the work of the virtues. Therefore he who has done all that is possible through the virtues in order to be configured with Christ will not be slow to find the desired rest. One day it will be given to him to drink of the fountain of living water [29] whereby he will be invigorated to begin a new type of life [30] and will receive wings to fly without tiring in order to soar to the lofty regions where the mystical transformation is effected.[31] To those who have been faithful in the little things, will be given new talents by which they can become grand and heroic in the big things.[32] Up to the point of the conforming union they traveled much more swiftly and mystically by the aid of the gifts than they did as ascetics with the simple help of the virtues practiced in a human manner; but to ascend higher, where all is extraordinary or superhuman, they must receive impulses from the spirit of renewal.[33]

Phenomena Which Accompany Contemplation

Certain phenomena usually accompany the afore-mentioned grades of prayer. With the prayer of recollection there comes at times a delightful admiration which dilates the soul and fills it with joy and gladness at discovering in God so many wonders of love, goodness, and beauty. At other times a spiritual silence prevails in which the soul remains astonished, absorbed, submerged, and, as it were, overcome by such grandeur.[84]

29 John 7:37; Apoc. 11:17.
80 Ps. 101:5.
81 Isa. 40:31.
82 Matt. 15:11-13.
88 Arintero, *Questiones Misticas,* IV.
81 Before and during the prayer of recollection the soul usually enjoys a vivid and almost continual loving presence of God whom the soul seems to feel in reality, although in a confused way, coming to know Him not only through the light of faith, but also by this superhuman type of experience. St. Teresa speaks of this lively sentiment of God in the second of her *Spiritual Relations* to Father Rodrigo Alvarez, where she considers this feeling as supernatural and the beginning of true contemplation. Father Gratian *(Itiner.,* chap. 9) calls it "an interior attention whereby the soul gazes with close scrutiny without turning away or being distracted from the supernatural concept, which concept causes it to be more and more inflamed with the love of God. Since this attention is sustained and peaceful,

When the will is touched and captivated and begins the prayer of quiet, then the happiness and joy of this admiration takes one of the two forms of the swoon of love, the one predominantly sensible and the other predominantly spiritual, wherein the soul, transported with enthusiasm and experiencing the ineffable taste of the sweetness of God, either melts away or jumps for joy and performs what is called the foolishness of love. In the latter case, it may burst forth with songs of praise, as did St. Francis and St. Magdalen of Pazzi, calling upon all created things to join in the praise of God's goodness,[35] or, containing itself outwardly and without the cost of great

without vacillating to many concepts, it is accustomed to be the beginning of all spiritual good. Some call it . . . dwelling within oneself; others, the center of the heart."

Garate, *Razôn y Fe,* May, 1907, p. 63: "Those who enjoy this divine experience confess that it is exceedingly easy to converse with the Lord. They say that they pass much pleasant time in a single petition or an ejaculation. With but little effort, when talking with others, they can give half their attention to the Lord. But leaving their occupations, they find Him again as if He were waiting for them. . . . This is more than the light of faith; it is the mysterious experience of something divine. Now the soul can say: 'I not only believe, but by means of that new light, I feel that God exists.' This experience comes upon some souls very subtly and surprises them like some new thing they had never known before."

85 Richard, *Benjamin minor,* chap. 37: "Sacred Scripture calls this taste of internal sweetness now a taste, now an inebriation. It is something that is both small and great. It is a small thing when compared with the future plenitude, but it is great when compared with any earthly happiness. . . . Oh marvelous sweetness, sweetness so great, sweetness so small! How could you not be great, since you exceed all earthly sweetness? How could you not be small since you enjoy a little drop of the plenitude of sweetness? You instill in minds a drop from the ocean of happiness and yet you inebriate the mind which you infuse. Rightly is such a little of so much called a taste, and yet rightly also is that called an inebriation which takes one out of his mind."

Speaking of these interior tastes, Father Juan de Jesus Maria *(Escuela de Oration,* tract. 1, dist. 53) says: "Sometimes there is perceived the fragrance of a most sweet odor which soothes the body and the soul. At other times there is a taste, even in the bodily tongue, and this causes great refreshment. Sometimes a joy is felt in the interior and it surpasses all the joys of this world, and those new to the service of God break forth into outward acts of jubilation because they cannot restrain themselves. This is usually called a spiritual intoxication or inebriation. . . . At other times there is a great spiritual contentment, a meditative discursus, accompanied by tears and sighs from the heart. Again, even without the effort of meditation, there seems to arise in the very center of the soul a fountain of sweet consolation, the peace and quiet of which gradually extend to all the parts of the body, and this type of taste or sensation seems better than the others which are felt only interiorly. . . . Finally, there are still other joys of the superior part which the Lord communicates in various ways, and these are most delicate and inexpressible things. The more they pertain to the intellectual part, the more securely are they possessed, and these are proper to contemplation."

Denis the Carthusian, *De fonte lutis,* art. 17: "Oh how good is the state of such

self-violence, inwardly it breaks forth with zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls.[86] Silence is changed into a placid sleep in which the heart, without realizing it, still keeps watch while it is inflamed with love and filled with strength.[37] In this state the divine Lover wishes that His spouses should remain tranquil and that no one should disturb them.[38]

When the prayer of union begins and all the faculties are bound in such a way that they no longer disturb the quietude of the will, this sleep is gradually changed into swoons of love, spiritual transports, and ecstatic faintings and raptures. In these states the soul, lost in the ocean of divine goodness, is so taken out of itself, so dissolved and absorbed in the love of the supreme Good because of the longings and impulses which overtake it, that it seems to wish to abandon the body so that it will no longer be impeded. On reaching the full union of ecstasy, the body remains as if dead, cold, immovable, and insensible until little by little it returns to itself and becomes reanimated.

Admiration, in turn, is changed into raptures and flights of the spirit and other marvelous effects. All of these things lead to mystical death and total renewal and transformation.[39] The three types of transport seem exteriorly to be identical and they are often given

a loving soul! How serene, how joyful, how heavenly and tranquil are all things in it! Where now are the clouds of vices, the winds of passions, the whirling phantasies, the manifold distractions, the disturbing temptations? Have not all those things fled from the presence of the Sun of Justice, from the image and heat and light of Wisdom?"

36 St. Bernard, *Serm. 6η in Cant.:* "During these assaults of love the soul cannot contain itself and, to alleviate the heart, it breaks forth into expressions of love which are without order, rule, or human rhetoric. It often happens, also, that the soul is mute and can merely give expression to sighs."

87 Cant. 5:2: "I sleep, and my heart watcheth."

88 Cant. 2:7: "I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake, till she please."

39 Gratian, *Itiner.,* chap. 10: "The affections of the soul enamored of God are effects of divine love and they are called: jubilation, joy, peace, inebriation, swooning, death, fire of love, jealousy, devotion, ecstasy and rapture, absorption in God, and the divine union."

St. Dionysius, *De divin, nomin.,* chap. 4: "Divine love is the cause of ecstasy; when it dominates, the lover.is no longer his own but belongs to the beloved. . . . Love is a unifying force."

Ven. Bartholomew of the Martyrs, *Comp, myst., annot. fin.:* "The love which always accompanies contemplation inflames, elevates, enraptures, transforms, and deifies."

the same name, but actually they are distinct. Ecstasy is an excess of love and it is effected gradually and gently. Therefore the soul can often prevent it by trying to distract itself when it feels the ecstasy approaching, or at least the soul has time to hide or to assume an unassuming posture so that no one will be able to notice anything. Rapture is caused by an excess of light and wonder and it comes suddenly and with great violence so that there is no way of resisting or preventing it. Ecstasy makes the person swoon and fall to the ground as if dead; rapture elevates one, transfigures, and tends to lift him into the air.[40] The flight of the spirit is a rapture in which the soul seems to be raised to unknown regions by an irresistible impulse. Sometimes it seems as if the soul were suddenly torn out of the body, and at other times it carries the body along with it in its flight, a result of which is elevation or levitation and sometimes even bilocation or spiritual telepathy.[41] In these cases certain persons seem to have a body as light as a feather (and actually it is true that

40 "During mystical inebriation the soul does not know what it says or does. It speaks sublime things and things which we are unable to understand, and for that reason such souls are either admired or disdained as objects of scandal. At other times love works in a very different manner and leaves them as if they were asleep. Although during the inebriation the soul becomes aware of the need to work or to speak, during the phase of apparent sleep love produces a weakness in which the soul feels a repugnance for working. It loses all consciousness, as in a true sleep, and it is necessary to awaken it, and this is not always easy to do. Sometimes souls in this state are found seated, at other times kneeling. . . .

"Since the body, though purified by penance, is still a great weight on the soul, it often happens that when the soul is attracted to God the body remains not only as if asleep, but like something dead. The extremities are cold and there is an insensibility together with the most painful experiences. This is due to the intense application of the soul, for, since the body cannot keep pace with the soul, it remains without activity or feeling, as if it were not alive. At the end of an hour or less, when this state comes to an end, such souls must drag their bodies along in a most painful manner until little by little the natural equilibrium is regained and they recover their normal warmth. It is for this reason that this state is called ecstasy or a going out of oneself. . . . It is recognized by the immobility and insensibility or, rather, the abandonment of the action of the soul on the body.

"In rapture the attraction of the heavenly beauty draws the soul in such a way that, rather than death, it is more like that which we shall experience in heaven when the happiness of the soul redounds to the body. During this state the physical features usually assume a particular beauty, which is much different in the case of ecstasy where the body seems to be abandoned like a useless garment" (Sauvé, *op. cit.,* pp. 75-78).

IIa IIae, q. 175, a.2, ad 1: "Ecstasy means simply a going out of oneself by being placed outside one's proper order; rapture denotes a certain violence in addition."

41 Concerning bilocation, see Ribet, *Mystique div.,* II, 202; Séraphin, *Principes de théol. myst.,* Meric, *Revue du monde invis.,* November, 1898; St. Augustine, *The City of God,* Bk. XVIII, chap. 23.

they can be moved by a breath of wind), and even when they walk it seems that they do not touch the ground. They often seem to feel beneath their feet a force or power which is trying to lift them up and they have to exert great effort to remain where they are. At the beginning of this type of rapture they usually experience a fear and terror at seeing themselves carried they know not where. Later they again become tranquil, after discovering a world of splendor and enjoying God as never before.[42]

[42] *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap. 5: "There is another kind of rapture, or flight of the spirit, as I call it, which, though substantially the same, is felt within the soul in a very different way. Sometimes the soul becomes conscious of such rapid motion that the spirit seems to be transported with a speed which, especially at first, fills it with fear, for which reason I told you that great courage is necessary for anyone in whom God is to work these favours, together with faith and confidence and great resignation, so that our Lord may do with the soul as He wills. Do you suppose it causes but little perturbation to a person in complete possession of his senses when he experiences these transports of the soul? We have even read in some authors that the body is transported as well as the soul, without knowing whither it is going, or who is bearing it away, or how, for when this sudden motion begins the soul has no certainty that it is caused by God.

"Can any means of resisting this be found? None whatever; on the contrary, resistance only makes matters worse. This I know from a certain person who said that God's will seems to be to show the soul that, since it has so often and so unconditionally placed itself in His hands, and has offered itself to Him with such complete willingness, it must realize that it is no longer its own mistress, and so the violence with which it is transported becomes markedly greater. This person, therefore, decided to offer no more resistance than a straw does when it is lifted up by amber (if you have ever observed this) and to commit herself into the hands of Him Who is so powerful, seeing that it is but to make a virtue of necessity.

"For my own part I believe that, if His Majesty were to reveal Himself to those who journey through the world to their perdition as He does to these souls, they would not dare—out of very fear, though not perhaps out of love—to offend Him.

"Turning now to this sudden transport of the spirit, it may be said to be of such a kind that the soul really seems to have left the body; on the other hand, it is clear that the person is not dead, though for a few minutes he cannot even himself be sure if the soul is in the body or no. He feels as if he has been in another world, very different from this in which we live, and has been shown a fresh light there, so much unlike any to be found in this life that, if he had been imagining it, and similar things, all his life long, it would have been impossible for him to obtain any idea of them. In a single instant he is taught so many things all at once that, if he were to labour for years on end in trying to fit them all into his imagination and thought, he could not succeed with a thousandth part of them. This is not an intellectual, but an imaginary vision, which is seen with the eyes of the soul very much more clearly than we can ordinarily see things with the eyes of the body; and some of the revelations are communicated to it without words. If, for example, he sees any of the saints, he knows them as well as if he had spent a long time in their company.

"When the soul, as far as it can understand, is right outside itself, great things are revealed to it; and, when it returns to itself, it finds that it has reaped very great advantages and it has such contempt for earthly things that, in comparison with

During the rapture and flight of the spirit the use of the senses may be lost, as happens in the state of ecstasy, but often the body remains in the same posture and the features are very animated and even radiant with light and supernatural beauty. Not infrequently the body ceases to touch the earth or be supported by the earth, and it soars into the air as if attracted by a sacred magnet.

In this manner the soul is purified and illumined in the measure that it draws near to God and increases its union with Him. More and more vividly it feels the divine touches. These vivify it and impress on it the mystical seal, the ardent longings with which it is inflamed when it receives the darts of divine love, the burning impulses which are thereby aroused, and the sweet and penetrating wounds of love which they produce in it, until it is totally transformed into a loving wound wherein is found its salvation and its life. These delicate, pure, delightful, and ineffable touches of the Beloved are first felt in the faculties and later in the very substance of the soul. They complete its purification from all earthly stain and so inflame it with divine love and intoxicate it with such delights that the soul is no longer able to contain itself.[43] Like iron

those it has seen, they seem like dirt to it. Thenceforward to live on earth is a great affliction to it, and, if it sees any of the things which used to give it pleasure, it no longer cares for them. . . . The Lord's wish seems to have been to show the soul something of the country to which it is to travel."

[43] *Ibid.*, chap. 11: "While the soul is in this condition, and interiorly burning, it often happens that a mere fleeting thought of some kind . . . or some remark which the soul hears about death's long tarrying, deals it, as it were, a blow, or, as one might say, wounds it with an arrow of fire. I do not mean that there actually is such an arrow; but, whatever it is, it obviously could not have come from our own nature. Nor is it actually a blow, though I have spoken of it as such; but it makes a deep wound, not, I think, in any region where physical pain can be felt, but in the soul's most intimate depths. It passes quickly as a flash of lightning and leaves everything in our nature that is earthly reduced to powder. During the time that it lasts we cannot think of anything that has to do with our own existence: it instantaneously enchains the faculties in such a way that they have no freedom to do anything, except what will increase this pain.

"The understanding is keenly on the alert to discover why this soul feels absent from God, and His Majesty now aids it with so lively a knowledge of Himself that it causes the distress to grow until the sufferer cries out aloud. However patient a sufferer she may be, and however accustomed to enduring great pain, she cannot help doing this, because this pain, as I have said, is not in the body, but deep within the soul. . . . She is conscious of a strange solitude, since there is not a creature on the whole earth who can be a companion to her—in fact, I do not believe she would find any in Heaven, save Him Whom she loves."

Dark Night of the Soul, Bk. II, chap. 23: "As His Majesty dwells substantially in the soul, where neither angel nor devil can attain to an understanding of that which

placed in the forge, the soul gives off flaming sparks of heavenly fire. Each touch of the Beloved impresses on the soul more vividly the seal of His loving Spirit, fills it with His strength, and inflames it with new longings,[44] leaving in it a hunger and thirst for love which ever increases and can never be satiated except by the full and stable union in which the soul is transformed entirely into Him.[45] As God

comes to pass, they cannot know the intimate and secret communications which take place there between the soul and God. These communications, since the Lord Himself works them, are wholly Divine and sovereign, for they are all substantial touches of Divine union between the soul and God; in one of which the soul receives a greater blessing than in all the rest, since this is the loftiest degree of prayer in existence.

"For these are the touches that the Bride entreated of Him in the Songs, saying: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui* (Cant, i:i). Since this is a thing which takes place in such close intimacy with God, whereto the soul desires with such yearnings to attain, it esteems and longs for a touch of this divinity more than all the other favours which God grants it."

[44] Cant. 8:6: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof are fire and flames."

[45] Ruysbroeck, *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum,* Bk. XII, chap. 55: "When the soul has felt the divine touch there is aroused in it a perpetual hunger that can be satiated with nothing. Such is the avid and anxious love, the aspiration of the created spirit for uncreated Goodness. God invites the soul and excites in it a vehement desire for enjoying Him, and the soul in turn desires to attain this enjoyment. Thence come that avidity, that hunger, that need for obtaining the soul's desire, which can never be satisfied. . . . God offers the soul exquisite dishes which are known only by one who has experienced them. . . . But the soul's hunger continually increases in spite of the indescribable delights which it receives from the divine touches. . . . Even if God were to grant us all the gifts of His saints, if He did not also give Himself, we would never be satisfied. The divine touch which arouses this hunger and thirst both excites and exasperates the soul, and the more intense the touch, the more vehement is the hunger. Such is the life of love when the soul is raised to that perfect degree which surpasses reason and understanding. Reason cannot calm this fever, just as reason cannot cause it, for this love has its origin in God Himself."

St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgatory,* chaps. 3, 9, 10: "When a soul returns to the purity and fairness of its first creation, there is immediately awakened in it the instinct which carries it to God as its beatific goal. This instinct grows more forceful continually and it works in the soul with an astonishing vehemence. The fire of charity which is inflamed in the soul gives it such an irresistible impulse toward its ultimate end that the soul deems it an intolerable torture to feel in itself any obstacle impeding it in its flight to God. Meanwhile the more light it receives, the more extreme is its torment. . . . God meanwhile works with the soul by infusing into it certain rays of love which burn it and He draws it to Himself with a force that would annihilate it, even though the soul is immortal. The soul then becomes so transformed in God that it seems to be one thing with Him. The God of love continues always to attract and inflame the soul, without leaving it for a moment, until He sees that it has returned to the purity in which He created it. . . . Then the soul enters into a state of purity which is so absolute that, not needing any further purification, it rests totally in God, without having, so to speak, anything proper to itself, but only that which is God's."

touches the soul with greater vehemence, He produces in it the irresistible impulses and the inexplicable wounds of that love which kills and vivifies.[46] These proceed from a divine touch which is so piercing and penetrating that the soul is, as it were, transfixed by a loving arrow which wounds it with a wound that gives the greatest delight. Therefore the soul cannot and does not wish to be healed by anything other than that which has so sweetly wounded it. When these wounds are renewed by new touches and new darts of love that are more and more fiery, the soul ultimately becomes a loving wound which makes it completely sound, purified, and divine, without any earthly stain.[47]

Scaramelli states that "by adding wound to wound the Holy

48 See St. Augustine, *Meditations,* chap. 37; St. Teresa, *Spiritual Relations,* V.

47 *The Living Flame,* stanza 2: "For an explanation of the nature of the wound here addressed by the soul, it must be known that a burn caused by material fire always leaves a wound on the part subjected to it. And fire has this property that, if it be applied to a wound that was not caused by fire, it is turned into a wound inflicted by fire. And this burn of love has the property that, when it touches a soul, whether this love be wounded by other wounds, such as miseries of sins, or whether it be whole, it leaves it wounded with love. Thus wounds due to another cause have now become wounds of love. But there is this difference between this loving burn and a burn caused by material fire, that the wounds made by the latter can only be healed by the application of other medicines, whereas the wound made by the burn of love can be cured by no other medicine, but only by the same burn that has caused the wound. And the same burn that cures the wound inflicts a wound as it cures it: for each time that the burn of love touches the wound of love, it inflicts a greater wound of love, and thus it cures and heals the more inasmuch as it wounds the more; for when the lover is most wounded he is most whole and the cure wrought by love is the infliction of a hurt and a wound over and above the wound already inflicted, until the wound is so severe that the soul comes to be wholly dissolved in the wound of love. And in this way, when it is now completely cauterized and turned into a wound of love, it regains its perfect health in love, because it is transformed in love. . . . Yet, though the soul is altogether wounded and altogether healthy, the burning of love still performs its office, which is to touch and to wound with love.

"Oh, happy wound, inflicted by One Who cannot but heal! Oh, fortunate and most happy wound, for thou wert inflicted only for relief, and the quality of thy pain is the relief and delight of the wounded soul! Great art thou, oh, delectable wound, since great is He that has inflicted thee; and great is thy relief, because the fire of love is infinite and it relieves thee according to thy capacity and greatness. Oh, then, thou delectable wound! So much the more sublimely delectable art thou in proportion as the burn has touched the infinite centre of the substance of the soul, burning all that was capable of being burned, that it might relieve all that was capable of being relieved. We may represent this burn and this wound as being the highest degree to which the soul can attain in this state. There are many other ways wherein God cauterizes the soul which attain not so far as this, nor are they like this; for this is a touch of the Divinity in the soul, without any form or figure whether intellectual or imaginary."

Ghost despoils the soul little by little of its earthly being and invests it with the divine. Therefore, when the soul is totally transformed into a wound of love, then it is that it becomes completely healthy. Later He returns to wound the soul anew but it is not then to heal the soul, but rather to enrich, refashion, and sublimate it. This latter state is perhaps the highest which can be attained by a soul united to the divine Word by perpetual friendship." 48

Sometimes these wounds of the soul are carried over to the body also, so that the soul configured with Jesus is able to manifest externally the bloody and glorious symbols of His passion.49 "The exterior," says Weiss, "is a manifestation of the interior. He who is interiorly crucified with Jesus Christ, why should he not also manifest exteriorly the stigmata of the Savior? 50 For one who understands what the saints are; that is, faithful imitators of the life, sufferings, and holiness of Jesus Christ, there is nothing surprising about the impression of His wounds." 51

48 *Op. cit.,* tract. 3, no. 259.

49 Dr. Imbert, who has made a profound study of these matters, enumerates 321 cases of persons who have received this favor, cases which he considers to be authentic. He likewise states that there are very likely many others which have never been recorded or which could still be found if one were to make a more thorough search through mystical libraries. We ourselves know of some cases of this nature in regard to persons actually living.

Of the cases enumerated by Dr. Imbert, 109 are Dominicans, 102 Franciscans, 14 Carmelites, 14 Ursulines, 12 Visitandines, 8 Augustinians, 5 Cistercians, 4. Benedictines, 3 Jesuits, 3 Theatines, 2 Trinitarians, 2 Hieronymites, 2 Conceptionists and 13 in other congregations, one to each. There is no record of anyone receiving this favor prior to the thirteenth century, when St. Francis of Assisi was so favored. From that time on the number increases, and in the nineteenth century, despite its religious indifference, there were 29 stigmatists. This seems to indicate a gradual growth in sanctification. Although the majority of persons so favored were women, Dr. Imbert mentions 41 men, and the stigmatists of both sexes who have been raised to the altar number 62. See Dr. Imbert's work, *La stigmatization et l'extase divine.*

50 Gal. 2:19; 6:17.

51 "The same can be said," Weiss adds, "of similar incidents in the lives of the saints. St. Catherine of Siena showed her face to the skeptical Blessed Raymond when it was an exact likeness of the face of Christ. An incredulous religious attests the same fact concerning St. Catherine de Ricci. Due to her profound meditations on the passion of Christ, St. Colette became totally unrecognizable because her face took on the appearance of that of Christ during His passion."

He who has the good fortune to see and recognize such things cannot help but experience a sublime, ineffable, and unforgettable emotion as I myself felt when the servant of God, Mother Mary of the Queen of the Apostles, totally transfigured, said to me only eight months before her death: "In spite of my resistance, our Lord has completely triumphed over me. Now He does with me according to His will.

If the union of all the activities of the soul with God is more fully realized during ecstasy, it is during raptures and flights of the spirit that the soul is best disposed to enter the mystical espousal and the spiritual marriage. These are always celebrated during some one of the great transports that the soul will better be able to endure the excess of light and grace which it then receives.[52] The espousal is always accompanied by a certain vision, at least in the imagination, of the sacred humanity of the Savior. Spiritual marriage is accompanied by another vision which is intellectual but of the same divine Word or even of the august Trinity in whose presence this irrevocable pact is solemnized.

In the prayer of recollection the soul is illumined concerning certain of the divine attributes or the mysteries of our Redemption. The soul perceives that God is present but as yet it does not perceive Him as being within itself. Rather, He seems to be at the soul's side or very near it by His immensity and grandeur. Almost always He manifests Himself under the veils of His sacred humanity.

In the prayer of quiet, once God has captivated the will, the soul can occasionally see how He begins to take control of all the other faculties and communicates to them an energy and facility which are truly divine. The soul feels Him to be very near and it trembles before His majesty and glory at the same time that it admires and loves Him. But sometimes it can see the Savior as He abides in its heart or itself resting on Him and it is inflamed with love for Him and inebriated by His sweetness.[53]

He works in me as He wishes, for now I know not how to resist Him. What I do know is that He is pleased with my nothingness." These words were spoken with a candor and humility that bore the stamp of divine testimony.

52 *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap. 4: "And now you are going to see what His Majesty does to confirm this betrothal, for this, as I understand it, is what happens when He bestows raptures, which carry the soul out of its senses; for if, while still in possession of its senses, the soul saw that it was so near to such great majesty, it might perhaps be unable to remain alive." It is to be noted that these excesses of light burn the soul very keenly, that they are extremely painful, and they leave the body depressed, as do the transports of charity and the impulses of love.

53 *Life,* chap. 15: "This prayer, then, is a little spark of true love for the Lord which He begins to enkindle in the soul, and His will is that it should come to understand the nature of this love with its attendant joy. This quiet and recollection—this little spark—if it proceeds from the Spirit of God and is not a pleasure bestowed on us by the devil or sought by ourselves, is not a thing that can be acquired, as anyone who has experience of it must perforce realize immediately, but this nature of ours is so eager for delectable experiences that it tries to get all it can.

In the prayer of union the soul to some extent sees God present within itself, captivating it completely, satiating its desires, and anointing all its faculties with ineffable delights.[54] But although it recognizes God in the profound depths of its being and cannot doubt that it is He, yet it sees Him, to a certain extent, not yet as its Father and Spouse, but as the sovereign Author of the natural order, who is there and in all places by His power and presence and essence. "For in Him we live, and move, and are." [55]

Therefore, in the more sublime raptures which are experienced during the prayer of union, the soul is able to see to some extent God's ineffable immensity and absolute unity; in the splendor of this glory, the soul sees itself as deified and without stain. This fact fills it with confusion, especially when it recalls its former baseness, misery, and malice. But although it seems impossible to the soul that it can attain more glory than it then has, it is not yet given to it to contemplate God save as to His back. The soul does not yet distinguish nor can it even see His face, which is the Word of His power and wisdom, nor the Spirit of love which He exhales from His mouth. It sees only the unity of His nature and not the distinction of persons wherein are contained the principal enchantments of the glory of the Father. It sees Him with the eyes of a creature and servant and not of a daughter and spouse who knows the secrets of the family and knows what is in the house of God.

To enjoy these greater privileges, the soul must pass through the great darkness wherein dwells the hidden God, there to receive

Soon, however, it becomes very cold; for, hard as we may try to make the fire burn in order to obtain this pleasure, we seem only to be throwing water on it to quench it. This little spark, then, planted within us by God, small though it is, makes a loud noise; and if we do not quench it through some fault of our own, it is this that begins to kindle the great fire which (as I shall say in due course) sends forth the flames of the most ardent love of God with which His Majesty endows the souls of the perfect."

54 Vallgornera *(Mystica theologia divi Thomae)* states that in the prayer of quiet the soul experiences the presence of God as joined to itself, but in the prayer of union it feels God's presence within itself. In this latter prayer all the faculties of the soul are for the most part suspended from their natural activity, whereas in the prayer of quiet this suspension pertains ordinarily to the will alone. The soul in the prayer of quiet still retains some of its misgivings concerning the truth of that which it is experiencing. It fears the illusions of its own imagination and the artifices of the devil, who at times transforms himself into an angel of light. But in the prayer of union neither the imagination nor the memory nor the understanding can present any obstacle and neither can the devil work against the soul.

65 Acts 17:28. See also *Interior Castle,* fifth mansions, chap. i.

other infusions of divine light which are so superior, so supernatural, and so pure that compared with them all else seems stained, even that which, under an inferior light, seemed transparent and without blemish. Under the action of the light of the Word, who is the true Light which illumines all our darkness, and of the blazing fire of His Spirit, which destroys all the impurities of creatures, the soul will become so purified and transformed that it will be able to penetrate into the sanctuary of the innermost divine secrets and enjoy familiar fellowship with the divine persons.

In the transforming union of the espousal, and even in the meetings and visits which prepare for it by showing the soul the great Good which is offered to it in order that it may the more desire and dispose itself to receive it, God presents Himself to the soul as the Author of the supernatural order. And if the adorable Trinity is not manifested to the soul, at least there appears to the soul filled with lovableness and beauty, the most sacred person of the incarnate Word, who is the person who directly espouses or first espouses holy souls, just as in His marvelous incarnation He espoused Himself to human nature and later with the Church. In the degree that it gradually dies to self and is transformed into Him through love, the soul sees intellectually in Christ's humanity the divinity of the Word.

But the union contracted in the espousal, although it is extremely intimate and is effected in the depths of the soul, is still transitory. To be made permanent by means of the spiritual marriage, it is required that the soul receive, in the dark contemplation, the final purifications of the night of the spirit. Once the marriage takes place, together with the renewal and transformation which this permanent union implies, the soul is fortified and receives all the vigor necessary to receive the excesses of divine light without any exterior modification or change. At this stage the soul rarely experiences ecstasies or raptures, but it enjoys almost continually the more or less clear presence of the most blessed Trinity and sees therein the most adorable mysteries and recondite secrets.[56] For this reason these souls

66 Scarainelli, *op. cit.,* Tract. 3, chap. 24: "There are two things that seem essential to this perfect union: first, the intellectual manifestation of the Holy Trinity and the awareness of their indwelling in the center of the soul; secondly, the revelation of the Word, also by an intellectual vision, with words and testimonies which inform the soul that it has been elevated to the dignity of a spouse. It matters little

can and do speak of such mysteries, not as something they have heard, but as a fact, as a reality they have seen and experienced, and no matter how incomprehensible and mysterious these things may be, they must necessarily be so.[57]

In this state all the conflicts of blind reason come to an end, just as those of sensation cease when all the senses are functioning normally. Therefore to souls filled with the Holy Ghost the dogmas of faith are much more than abstract truths; they are prodigious and vital truths that are actually felt. So it is that, as Blondel says, the Church does not and never will fear that she will ever contradict herself or fall into error, in spite of the wiles of her enemies and the forceful objections which they perpetually raise up against her. For the Church has complete awareness of the truth which lives and she knows that she cannot teach other than the pure living truth which she feels and experiences.[58] "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life: for the life was manifested: and we have seen and do bear witness and declare unto you the life eternal, which was in the Father, and hath appeared to us." [59]

whether these two manifestations are simultaneous or successive, as long as the alliance of the soul with the Word is contracted in the presence of the august Trinity. At least in the logical order, the Trinity appears first to prepare for this holy union and to be a witness to it."

It is the habitual presence of the Trinity in the soul that best distinguishes the state of spiritual matrimony from the simple espousal, especially when the ceremonies of these two unions are repeated. And although both these unions are usually contracted directly with the Word, according to one or other of His attributes, some souls contract another type of marriage with the Holy Ghost. Father Tanner, in the preface to the works of the Venerable Marina de Escobar, says that "when God wishes to be espoused with man, He assumes the feminine attribute of mercy or wisdom, as happened in the case of St. John Almoner, St. Lawrence Justinian, Blessed Henry Suso, and others." The Venerable Marina herself was favored several times with the celebration of her espousal or marriage (it is difficult to distinguish which it was), first with the Word, in 1598, at the age of 44, and later, in 1622, with the Holy Ghost. In one of her revelations she was given to understand that the last marriage was the principal one. Blessed Angela of Foligno was also espoused of the Holy Ghost.

57 See *Interior Castle,* seventh mansions, chap. 1; Blosius, *Institutiones,* chap. 12.

58 Rightfully does Joly say *(The Psychology of the Saints,* chap. 1) that what was taught by Benedict XIV concerning the beatification and canonization of the saints are not external rules imposed by authority for the recognition of sanctity but "an experimental resume of what has gradually been revealed to doctors and pastors of the Church by the actions of Christianity upon succeeding generations and by the spontaneous development of sanctity."

59 1 John 1:1 f.

APPENDIX

1. Ineffable Ecstasies and Swoons of Love

Blessed Angela of Foligno, Visions and Instructions, chap. 56:

When the soul is elevated above itself and, illumined by the presence of God, enters into intimate communication with Him, it knows, enjoys, and rests in a divine happiness which it cannot express, for it surpasses every word and every concept. There the soul swims in joy and knowledge and, illuminated in the fountain of light, it penetrates the obscure and difficult words of Jesus Christ. . . . Each ecstasy is a new ecstasy and all the ecstasies together are one inexpressible thing. Revelations and visions follow but each is distinct. Delight, pleasure, joy; all follow at distinct intervals. O do not make me speak! I do not speak; I blaspheme. If I open my mouth, instead of proclaiming God, I shall perform an act of treason.

St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogues,* II, 1; III, 8:

Ecstasy cannot be continual. The soul, the spirit, and the body which, by the abundance of these marvelous gifts, have received an increase of sanctity, must return to the customary works of this exile. . . . But the Lord watches over them from on high . . . and He calls them anew and incessantly raises their spirit to Himself until He adorns them with perfect purity and makes the soul and body equally free from all the weaknesses of fallen nature. . . . It is to this point that we are led by the love which the Lord deigns to bestow on us. His charity is so remarkable that, even without awaiting the cooperation of the soul, He lavishes on it the fruits of the Holy Ghost. . . . The treasures of blessings which He communicates to it and which contain all goods are changed into an ocean of love wherein the soul is submerged in spiritual delights which surpass all understanding and make it lose every vestige of its former existence in Adam. If even the slightest remembrance of its previous state were offered to the soul, it would appear as horrible as hell itself. How ineffable is this transformation! The soul possesses even in this life a participation in glory. . . . Who could worthily appreciate these marvelous communications between the soul and God? . . . Who would not be inebriated with this happiness of holy love which is a prelude to glory? . . . Ah, those joys and blessings are unknown to the world. They cannot be known by any save the privileged lovers of the Savior who here below lose themselves in the ocean of illuminations and delights which will never end. . . . O Love! The heart which Thou

dost possess is so great, so generous, so magnanimous, that it would rather endure every type of martyrdom than to lose one atom of that sweet and pure peace with which Thou dost favor it. But this peace cannot be rightly evaluated except by those who have been made worthy of it.

Blessed Henry Suso, *Union del alma,* chap. 3:

From contemplation proceeds an interior joy which produces an ineffable happiness. . . . I possessed this happiness for ten years, although it seemed but one hour. My heart was so overjoyed that I cannot express it in words. I was absorbed in God and in the eternal Wisdom. I had certain tender conversations with my Creator in which only my spirit talked. I wept and sighed; I laughed and cried. It seemed to me that I was raised above all space, across time and eternity, and that I was swimming in an ocean of admirable and divine truths. My heart abounded with such joy that it seemed that it would burst within my breast, and I had to raise my hands there in order to restrain it. . . . Once I saw spiritually that the heart of my heavenly Father was joined to mine in an ineffable manner. Yes, I felt the heart of God, divine Wisdom without form or image, who spoke to me in the innermost recesses of my heart, and in the swoon of my joy I exclaimed: "O my sweet Beloved and my only Love, see how I embrace Thy divinity, heart to heart! O my God, more lovable than all lovable things! He who loves remains distinct from the beloved, but Thou, the infinite sweetness of true love, art poured forth like a perfume in the hearts of those who love Thee and Thou dost penetrate the total essence of their souls. There is nothing in Thee which remains apart from them. Thou dost embrace them divinely and remain united with them under the bonds of an infinite love."

2. Divine Inflamations and Longings of Wounding and Transforming Love

Blessed Angela, *op. cit.,* chap. 57:

The sovereign Good comes to the soul and the soul feels Him . . . and participates in Him. Wounded by sovereign Love, wounded and inflamed, it desires to possess God. It embraces Him, it presses Him to itself and is pressed in turn to Him. God attracts the soul by His immense sweetness, and the power of His love transforms the one into the other: the lover becomes the Beloved and the Beloved becomes the lover. The soul, inflamed with the power of love, is transformed into God, its Love. Just as heated iron receives into itself the heat and power and form of fire, and is made like fire, and is absorbed by the fire so that it loses its

own proper characteristics and gives an asylum to the fire in the very core of its substance, so the soul which is united to God by the perfect grace of love is transformed in God without changing its own proper substance.

St Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* Part I, chap. 29:

The Holy Ghost, ever immovable and ever moving, takes from the glory of the Father a pure and luminous ray, and from the incarnate Son, a sharp and flaming dart of love, in order to enlighten and darken, wound and heal, inflame and chill, humiliate and glorify, the creatures into whose hearts they are received and to make them walk by the path of love. From the bond which eternally unites this divine Spirit to the divine persons in a unity which is the most intimate that love and likeness can produce, He takes, by way of a breathing, another bond of love by which the soul is united to God with a union similar to that of the Trinity. Then with perfect resignation the soul delivers to God all its faculties, now united among themselves—the memory, the understanding, and the will—so that it neither desires nor can it desire (thanks to this union with God) to recall, know, or wish for anything other than His unique and perfect love, the fount of every blessing, the divine charity. . . . Oh, how fortunate would one be who, in the likeness of the blessed, could no longer break that bond! . . . From the superabundance of the glory of the saints the divine Spirit gathers, so to speak, the crumbs which fall from the table and distributes them to His spouses who are at once rich and poor: rich, for having received such great benefits; poor, because they are always hungering for more at the same time that they realize they are unworthy of more. Thanks to this heavenly food, God grows in them and flourishes in their hearts. *Magnificat anima mea Dominum!* . . . The increase of the Father in souls is incomprehensible; that of the Word of His love, inscrutable; and that of the Holy Ghost, ineffable.

3. Divine Touches; Wounds and Flames of Love

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *loc. cit.:*

Oh, soft hand! For whereas Thou wert harsh and severe to Job, since Thou didst touch him somewhat heavily, to me Thou art as loving and sweet as Thou wert to him, and art laid upon my soul very firmly, but very lovingly and graciously and softly. For Thou givest death and Thou givest life and there is none that can escape from Thy hand. But Thou, O Life divine, never slayest save to give life, even as Thou never woundest save to heal. When Thou chastisest, Thou touchest lightly, yet Thy

touch suffices to consume the world; but, when Thou bringest joy, Thou art laid firmly upon the soul and thus the joys of Thy sweetness are without number. Thou hast wounded me, O hand divine, in order to heal me, and Thou hast slain in me that which would have slain me but for the life of God wherein now I see that I live. And this Thou didst with the liberality of Thy generous grace, which Thou showedst me in the touch wherewith Thou didst touch me—namely, the splendour of Thy glory and the image of Thy substance, which is Thy only begotten Son; in Whom, since He is Thy wisdom, Thou reachest from one end to another mightily. And this Thy only begotten Son, O merciful hand of the Father, is the delicate touch wherewith in the power of Thy burn Thou didst touch me and wound me.

O delicate touch, Thou Word, Son of God, Who, through the delicateness of Thy divine Being, dost subtly penetrate the substance of my soul, and, touching it wholly and delicately, dost absorb it wholly in Thyself in divine ways of delight and sweetness which have never been heard of in the land of Canaan, nor seen in Teman. O delicate touch of the Word, delicate, yea delicate indeed, to me, which, having overthrown the mountains and broken the stones in Mount Horeb with the shadow of Thy power and strength that went before Thee, didst reveal Thyself more sweetly and powerfully to the Prophet with the whisper of gentle air. Oh, gentle touch, that art so delicate and gentle! Say, Word, Son of God, how dost Thou touch the soul so gently and delicately when Thou art so terrible and powerful? Oh blessed, thrice blessed, the soul whom Thou dost touch so delicately and gently though Thou art so terrible and powerful! Tell out this to the world. Nay, tell it not to the world, for the world knows naught of air so gentle, and will not hear Thee, because it can neither receive Thee nor see Thee. Only they who withdraw from the world and whom Thou refinest shall know Thee, my God and my life, and behold Thee when Thou touchest them delicately, since purity corresponds with purity, and thus they shall feel Thee and rejoice in Thee. Thou shalt touch them the more delicately because the substance of their souls has been beautified and purified and made delicate, and has been withdrawn from every creature and from every trace and touch of creature, and Thou art dwelling secretly and surely within them. And Thou hidest them in the hiding-place of Thy presence (which is the Word) from the disturbance of men.

Once again, then, oh, delicate touch, and again most delicate, the stronger and more powerful for being more delicate, that with the strength of Thy delicacy dost melt and remove the soul from all other touches of created things and makest it Thine own alone and unitest it

with Thyself. So gentle an effect and impression dost Thou leave in the soul that every other touch, of everything else, whether high or low, seems to it rude and gross and even in the sight of other things will offend it and to have to do with them and touch them will cause it trouble and grievous torment.

Oh, then, last of all, Thou ineffably delicate touch, that art the Word, that touchest not the soul save with Thy most pure and simple Being, which, being infinite, is infinitely delicate, and therefore touches most subtly, lovingly, eminently and delicately!

Although this is not so in a perfect degree, there is indeed a certain savour herein of life eternal, as has been said above, which the soul tastes in this touch of God. And it is not incredible that this should be so if we believe, as we must believe, that this touch is substantial, that is to say, is a touch of the Substance of God in the substance of the soul; and to this many holy men have attained in this life. Wherefore the delicacy of the delight which is felt in this touch is impossible of description; nor would I willingly speak thereof, lest it should be supposed that it is no more than that which I say; for there are no words to expound such sublime things of God as come to pass in these souls; whereof the proper way to speak is for one that knows them to understand them inwardly and to feel them inwardly and enjoy them and be silent concerning them. For the soul in this state sees that these things are in some measure like the white stone which S. John says will be given to him that conquers, and on the stone a name shall be written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

And in this good which comes to the soul the unction of the Holy Spirit sometimes overflows into the body, and this is enjoyed by all the substance of sense and all the members of the body and the very marrow and bones, not as feebly as is usually the case, but with a feeling of great delight and glory, which is felt even in the remotest joints of the feet and hands. And the body feels such glory in the glory of the soul that it magnifies God after its own manner, perceiving that He is in its very bones, even as David said: All my bones shall say, "God, who is like unto Thee?" *(The Living Flame,* st. 2) . . .

It will come to pass that, when the soul is enkindled in the love of God, although not to the high degree of which we have spoken, . . . the soul will be conscious of an assault upon it made by a seraph with an arrow or a dart completely enkindled in fire of love, which will pierce the soul, now enkindled like a coal, or, to speak more truly, like a flame, and will cauterize it in a most sublime manner; and when it has pierced and cauterized it thus with that arrow, the flame (that is, the soul) will rush forth

and will rise suddenly and vehemently, even as comes to pass in a furnace or a heated forge, when they stir or poke the fire, and make the flame hotter. Then upon being struck by this enkindled dart, the soul is conscious of the wound with a sovereign delight; for, besides being wholly moved in great sweetness, by the stirring and the impetuous motion caused by that seraph, wherein it feels the great heat and melting of love, the keen wound and the healing herb wherein the effect of the dart was being greatly assuaged are felt by the soul like a keen point in the substance of the spirit, even as in the heart of him whose soul has been thus pierced.

If God should sometimes permit the effect of the wound to show itself in the bodily senses, in a way corresponding to the interior wound, the effect of the impact and the wound will be felt without, as came to pass when the seraph wounded the soul of S. Francis with love, inflicting upon him five wounds, and in that way the effect of these wounds became visible in his body, and he was actually tvounded, and received the imprint of the wounds in his body as he had also received them in his soul. For, as a rule, God bestows no favours upon the body without bestowing them first and principally upon the soul. And then, the greater is the delight and strength of love which causes the wound within the soul, the more of it is manifested outwardly in the bodily wound, and if the one grows, the other grows likewise. . . . Wherefore it is a wondrous thing to feel the pain growing in the pleasure. This wonder Job perceived in his wounds, when he said to God: Turning to me, Thou tormentest me wondrously. For it is a great marvel, and a thing worthy of the abundance of the sweetness and delight which God has laid up for them that fear Him, that, the greater is the pain and torment of which the soul is conscious, the greater is the pleasure and delight which He causes it to enjoy.

St. Teresa, Life, chap. 29:

No words will suffice to describe the way in which God wounds the soul and the sore distress which He causes it, so that it hardly knows what it is doing. Yet so delectable is this distress that life holds no delight which can give greater satisfaction. As I have said, the soul would gladly be dying of this ill.

This distress and this bliss between them bewildered me so much that I was never able to understand how such a thing could be. Oh, what it is to see a wounded soul! . . . Oh, how often, when in this state, do I remember that verse of David: *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad*

fontes aquarum (Ps. 41:!), which I seem to see fulfilled literally in myself!

When these impulses are not very strong they appear to calm down a little, or, at any rate, the soul seeks some relief from them because it knows not what to do. It performs certain penances, but it is quite unable to feel them, while the shedding of its blood causes it no more distress than if its body were dead. It seeks ways and means whereby it may express something of what it feels for the love of God; but its initial pain is so great that I know of no physical torture which can drown it.

It pleased the Lord that I should sometimes see the following vision. I would see beside me, on my left hand, an angel in bodily form—a type of vision which I am not in the habit of seeing, except very rarely. Though I often see representations of angels, my visions of them are of the type which I first mentioned. It pleased the Lord that I should see this angel in the following way. He was not tall, but short, and very beautiful, his face so aflame that he appeared to be one of the highest types of angel who seem to be all afire. It must be those who are called cherubim: they do not tell me their names but I am well aware that there is a great difference between certain angels and others, and between these and others still, of a kind that I could not possibly explain. In his hand I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated into my entrails. When he drew it out, I thought he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afire with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God. It is not bodily pain, but spiritual, though the body has a share in it—indeed, a great share.

St. Gertrude once saw the Lord with a golden arrow, and He said to her: "I desire to pierce thy heart through and through so that the wound can never be healed." She perceived that this arrow of divine love produced three types of wounds: the first weakened her and made her languid so that all sensible pleasures became insipid and there was nothing on earth that could console her. The second produced a stroke of violent fever which made her zealously long for a remedy for evil. A soul in that state yearns with extreme longings to be united with God, knowing that only in possession

of Him will it find salvation. The third wound produced certain effects which are so extraordinary that one can say only that it is like the separation of the soul from the body with the result that it enjoys even in this life joys so great that they leave the soul totally inebriated. (See *Revelations,* Bk. V, chap. 29.)

"How sweet is that loving dart which, in wounding us with the incurable wound of divine love, leaves us forever sick and with such a violent beating of the heart that it leads to death" (St. Francis de Sales, *The Love of God,* Bk. VII, chap. 10).

4. Diversity of Impulses and Wounds of Love

Father Hoyos *(Vida,* pp. 125-29) describes various classes of impulses and wounds of love. The first are sensible and exterior and in them, he says:

> the countenance is inflamed, the body seems to be on fire, the heart experiences violent leaps. Now one breaks forth in groans and tears; now one would wish to be in a desert place in order to cry out and to give vent to the vehement feelings in his breast. These movements came over me at times with so great an abundance and such force that they took my breath away and my body endured such violence that it was utterly fatigued. Because of the fire which burned in my heart, a blister appeared exteriorly and it grew in proportion to the fervor and left me when the Lord took from me that sensible devotion.

Later, when he was further advanced, he began to experience other things which were the more painful and penetrating as they became more spiritual. He says:

> It often happened, sometimes during prayer, sometimes outside of prayer . . . that the full force of these things came upon me suddenly and they passed over every part of my heart, causing a sweet pain, a delightful suffering, a painful gift, and a blending of joy and pleasure. My soul greatly rejoiced in this sorrow, although it caused a piercing pain, and the soul never wished it to cease; yet, on the other hand, the soul would not be able to endure it, had it been increased. This wounding impulse consists in an act of love which the Lord infuses into the soul and which wounds the soul in many ways. Sometimes there comes a great desire to be separated from the body and, when the soul sees itself tied down, it experiences a sweet pain. At other times, it feels love divide the superior from the inferior parts. . . . On still other occasions, my un-

demanding was illumined by a clear light and my will was irresistibly drawn toward the object known and, since that light showed the object to be infinitely lovable, it caused the will a sweet sorrow to see that its smallness was not enlarged. Sometimes, besides the many other types of wounds which I experienced, the Lord would wound the very substance of the soul directly by a substantial touch so divine and so sweet that only one who has experienced it will be able to understand it.

The third type of impulse is the instrument of raptures. . . . It consists in a sudden light which dazzles the intellectual faculty. . . . The light comes and immediately it snatches me by the hair as it were (as Habbacuc was snatched from Judea to Babylon) . . . and I am suspended between heaven and earth. Whence comes the soul and whither is it snatched? To Jerusalem, that is, to the vision of peace, for then it remains in a supreme peace. . . . The other flights cause ecstasy; these cause rapture.

The fourth kind of impulse "pertains to the heights of contemplation," and Father Hoyos believed it impossible to describe them. He was content to say:

I have suffered great abandonments, sorrows, tediousness, dismay, temptations, pains caused in the soul by demons, and the suffering of hell; but all these things are nothing when compared with what is suffered in this fourth type of flight. And that which I enjoy is greater also than all the pleasures and joys previously possessed. . . . To speak of this experience is more difficult because I find such great marvels in this state which show forth the wisdom of God. He contrived this invention in order to try His friends and to favor them at the same time by joining extreme suffering with extreme joy. Sometimes, when very discouraged, I feel my soul placed above all created things and even above itself . . . in an immense solitude as if the whole world were a desert. It loves God wholly, nor does it stop to consider only His goodness, His mercy, or His omnipotence, but it throws itself wholeheartedly on God without loving anything in particular about Him. Nevertheless it seems to the soul that it does not love Him, but that it is far from loving Him and it acts like one who is begging for a little love. O invention of Omnipotence! Love places the soul in the agonies of death! It is consumed in the desires of love, thinking that it does not love. It dies of a suffering which, like a double-edged knife, penetrates into the deep and hidden interior of the spirit. It contemplates the infinite lovableness of the infinite object and is snatched toward Him by such a vehement grasp that this alone would seem sufficient to snatch it out of the body. But . . . still im-

prisoned in the mortal flesh, which prevents it from being totally consumed by the infinity of its God, the soul experiences a sorrow which sweetly consumes it.

"Oh, abyss of charity!" exclaims St. Catherine of Siena (Letter 123). "Thou art a fire that ever burns but does not consume; a fire filled with joy, happiness, and sweetness. To the heart which is wounded with this arrow all bitterness seems sweet and all heaviness is turned into lightness. Oh, sweet love which satiates and invigorates our soul. And although I said that it burned and did not consume, now I say that it burns, consumes, destroys, and dissolves every defect, all ignorance and all negligence which were present in the soul; for charity is never slothful." "These arrow's," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Genoa (*Dial.*, Ill, 13), "are flaming darts of love, . . . of an irresistible love. When, like the tongues of flame which descended upon the Apostles on Pentecost, they penetrate the joints and sinew's of the heart (Heb. 4), the heart melts like wax in an oven. . . . Whatever it possessed of mortality was absorbed and consumed in the ardors of the supernatural life (II Cor. 5) and now there is felt no other attraction but that of abandoning itself to Me and of referring all things to My love. . . . Know you not that it is written that a river of fire shall spring forth from My mouth? (Dan. 7.) . . . These flaming darts arc like waves of fire which proceed from that flaming current. . . . 'I hey flow from My breast and communicate such ardor and interior power to man that he can now do nothing else but love, remaining inseparably united with his God."

It is in this way that souls arc purified, illumined, and deified. Says Gratian, *Itin.*, chap. 11, sect. 3:

It is as if three rivers sprang forth from within. One is of crystal and by it a person arrives at lofty purity; the other is of light, by which the soul attains to light inaccessible; the third is of fire, by w'hich one attains seraphic love. The indwelling of the three divine persons in the soul is the first phase of life with Christ. The second is the transfiguration, transmutation, or transformation of the soul into Christ. When the soul is raised above itself, as on a divine Mount Tabor, to a height which is much loftier than the soul can ever understand, . . . the countenance of its understanding becomes more resplendent than the sun, for it not only receives rays of light to become brilliant in itself, but also to enlighten others. The faculties become as white as snow . . . for all of them cease

to act evilly and are employed in good works. The soul finds itself as if it lived amid the saints in heaven. . . . This blessed life and heavenly conversation are an imitation of eternal life and the highest type of life which the soul can attain in this life.

5. Impression of the Mystical Seal and Perfect Configuration with Christ

St. Matilda thus describes the way she received the impression of the divine seal: The Savior called her to Himself and, putting His divine hands in hers, He gave her all the works which He had performed in His holy humanity. He fixed His eyes on hers in such a way that she could see through those same divine eyes. He pressed His mouth on hers and gave her, in compensation for her negligences, all the praise, thanksgiving, prayers, and exhortations which had come forth from His divine lips. Finally, He united His heart with hers and He communicated to her His devotion and love and the plenitude of His graces. At the contact of the fire of His love, her heart melted like wax in fire. Thus was He completely imprinted on her so that she was changed into the faithful image of His divine perfection and made one with Him (*Lib. spec, grat.,* I, 1).

St. Gertrude says (*Leg. div. piet.,* II, 7) that the Holy Ghost inflames hearts with the fire of His love and leaves them like melted wax. Then upon them the Savior stamps His image like a divine seal. This favor seemed to her to be the greatest of all favors.

Interior Castle, fifth mansions, chap. 2: "Never, I think, will God grant this favour save to the soul which He takes for His very own. His will is that, without understanding how, the soul shall go thence sealed with His seal. In reality, the soul in that state does no more than the wax when a seal is impressed upon it—the wax does not impress itself; it is only prepared for the impress: that is, it is soft—and it does not even soften itself so as to be prepared; it merely remains quiet and consenting."

6. Operations of the Word in Sealed and Configured Souls

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, chaps. 3 f:

The Word loves the soul with such a love that He gives Himself to it as its food. He unites it to His humanity in a most intimate manner; He

communicates to it the ardent desires, pure affections, and holy words and works of His own humanity. In a word, He transforms it into Himself. This transformation raises the soul to such a high degree of perfection that each one of its aspirations for God draws, in a certain manner, the Word from the bosom of the Father into its own.

Possessing the Word, it becomes, by reason of this intimate and loving union, like another Word. Just as He desired with a great desire to give Himself to creatures, so does the soul experience a great desire to communicate itself to others; that is, to communicate to them the Word which it possesses with all His graces and gifts, so that it can in truth say: "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you." The Word proceeds immediately to the washing of the feet where He abases and humbles Himself to wash even the feet of Judas. So also does He abase and humble the operation of the soul, washing and purifying it by the sprinkling of His blood, of all affections and desires, giving it a most lowly opinion of itself. But what does the Word do next? He proceeds to the sermon of the Last Supper, where He leads the soul in order to glorify it even here below; that is, He introduces it to His sacred heart where He speaks to it face to face in sweet conversation. He tells it that He is the way, the truth, and the life. He makes the soul know that He is the vine and His Father is the master of the vineyard. Lastly, He tells the soul that it will be persecuted and the world will rejoice.

The arrest of the Word with all its surrounding circumstances is reproduced in the little world of the soul. . . . He was exposed to ridicule, and the soul passes through the same trial when, on communicating its afflictions to others, instead of receiving consolation, it hears it said that these things are punishments for its faults. . . . Christ was placed with Barabbas, and the soul is compared with other persons who are less perfect, and these are heaped with honors while the soul is scorned. . . . The Word received the cross on His shoulders, and the perfect soul receives a weighty cross when other perfect souls refuse to believe it. . . . Christ died on His cross, and the perfect soul also dies by perfect abandonment of itself to the hands of God. . . . The Word appeared to His Mother, and the soul also appears to its mother when it is forced to manifest its operation to the Church. Christ did not permit Magdalen to touch Him; the perfect soul imitates Him . . . when it does not permit its spiritual works to be mingled with perishable and earthly works. . . . The soul imitates the other apparitions of its Spouse when, for the greater glory of God, it reveals its operations to certain persons illumined with heavenly light, in order to comfort them. . . . The Word sent the Holy Ghost, and the perfect soul also sends Him in a certain measure when,

after attracting Him by fervent aspirations, it diffuses Him, by communications and spiritual exhortations, to other souls who are disposed to receive Him. . . . Such are the operations which the Word Incarnate performs in the little world of the soul. . . . He sent prophets to announce His own coming; but He Himself descends to the soul where in a spiritual manner He works all the things Fie had really performed in His Humanity, from His incarnation to His death. Finally, the soul dies, rises, and ascends with Him into heaven, although it remains on earth.

Our Lord manifested to St. Margaret Mary *(Autobiog.,* Ill) that she should be before Him like a canvas before a painter so that He could trace on her heart all the lines of His sorrowful life and that He would trace all these things after He had purified her of all stains, self-love, and affection for creatures. "In a moment," she adds, "He despoiled me of everything and, after my heart was empty and naked, He implanted in it such a flaming desire to suffer and to love that it left me not a moment of rest."

But in the midst of such sufferings, the favors, consolations, and graces are so much increased that, inundated with their delights, the soul is often forced to cry out: "My God, hold back this torrent which inundates me, or enlarge my heart to receive it."

7. Mystical Death, Burial, and Resurrection

Ven. Sister Barbara *(Life,* pp. 271, 351), while attending Mass, heard the Lord say to her:

"Daughter, I wish to form in you a heart that is worthy of Me, and this must be done by means of sacrifices." Having said this, it seemed that my God took my heart in His holy hands and, uniting it to Elis own, He made one heart out of the two, giving me thereby to understand how intimate a union He desires me to have with the divine Majesty. . . . On another day, when I was pouring forth the affections of my heart for God, I saw Elim approach me and He began to root out of my heart all its evil, leaving it superbly clean. The sorrow and love which I then experienced I cannot describe. It is a sorrow filled with the happiness of heaven and it is in no way like anything that one experiences in natural sufferings. The body suffers, but all the time the soul is dilated with joy and sweetness. . . . My God manifested Himself to me and filled my heart with His love and with a profound peace and great humility. I cannot explain the affections of my heart on these occasions. It is enough to

say that I find myself filled with God and so intimately united with Him that I am no longer myself; I am entirely lost in God. Each day this divine union is augmented. I am dead to all things. But after these experiences the desolation and agonies of my spirit are also increased.

See also St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogue,* III, io.

Our Lord said to Blessed Henry Suso *(Eternal Wisdom,* p. 21):

Suffer persecutions with love and humility, without thinking of defending yourself. Pray for your enemies with love, pardoning them before your heavenly Father. In this way will you die for love on the cross. My death will be repeated in yours and your patience will be a new flower in My Passion.

The soul which, through the imitation of Christ, finds itself dying with Him on the Cross can again find itself in the depth of His Divinity, for He Himself has made this promise: "Where I am, there also shall My minister be" (John 12:26). The first encounter is hard and austere and in it are blood and crosses; but the second is full of joy and happiness. There the soul loses its own activity and disappears in the ocean of the divine Essence and in that precisely consists its salvation and happiness. . . . The spirit of perfect men can be raised to this abyss of the Divinity . . . and it can be engulfed in the incomprehensible depths of the divine Essence. There, bereft of all base thoughts, it remains immovable in the divine secrets. Then despoiled of the obscurity of its natural light, it is clothed in a superior light. It is attracted by God to the simplicity of His unity wherein it loses itself to self to be transformed in Him, not by nature, but by grace. In this infinite sea of light which engulfs the soul it enjoys a silence wherein is perfect peace and tranquillity. It understands that eternal and existent nothingness which is the incomprehensible divine Essence; that nothingness which is so called because it is nothing created and the human spirit can find no created thing which is able to contain it. It sees that this nothingness surpasses all understanding and is incomprehensible to all intellects. When the spirit begins to establish itself in the darkness of the light, it loses all awareness of self and it no longer knows itself because it is absorbed and buried in God. And since in these heights it receives into its pure substance a light which irradiates from the unity of the divine Essence and from the Trinity of Persons, it loses its spirit in these splendors. It dies to self and to the use of its own powers and faculties. It remains enraptured and absorbed, as it were, in a divine ignorance and an ineffable silence of infinite light and supreme unity. This is the highest state which man can attain *(Union,* p. 6).

Ven. Mary Agreda repeatedly experienced the mystical death, dying by degrees to self and to all that is earthly and human, in order to live more intimately with God. From each one of these deaths she came forth more renewed and more transformed. Cf. *Mystical City of God,* Introduction, Part III.

St. John of the Cross gives a resume of this entire marvelous series of operations in this magnificent stanza in *The Living Flame of Love,* cant. 2:

Oh, sweet burn! Oh, delectable wound! Oh, soft hand! Oh, delicate touch
That savours of eternal life and pays every debt! In slaying, thou hast changed death into life.

Difference between These Phenomena and Natural Phenomena

Before proceeding further it is well to dispel at this point some of the confusion which has troubled the souls of many believers on account of the lamentable naturalism which is rampant on all sides. So harmful are its effects that it destroys in many souls the idea of the supernatural and makes them descend from the sublime ideal of Christians to the lowly status of mere deists. All the marvelous phenomena of the supernatural life that we have described are a reflection of the light with which Jesus Christ enlightens us and they enable men of good will to receive the peace of heaven and to glorify the Father of lights. But the rationalists cannot tolerate these divine splendors and they close their eyes in disdain. When they discover that this is not sufficient, they attempt to identify the marvels of the great saints with the disturbances of unfortunate neurotics, and their divine ecstasies with mental disorders, also called "ecstasies," which are suffered naturally by certain persons, and especially those who are hysterical, when they fix their attention too much on one thing. It is thus that many Mohammedan fanatics attain and produce their ecstasies at will.

But although outwardly these phenomena appear similar and bear the same name, basically they are entirely distinct. It is to be admitted that in both these types of "ecstasy" the body remains rigid, cold, and almost dead and that sensibility and movement arc

recovered only by degrees until normal circulation is re-established, bodily heat returns, and the person is completely reanimated. But they differ in the following ways: first, in the natural "ecstasy" the soul is, as it were, in a deep lethargy, without thinking of anything or at least without the power to recall anything; in divine ecstasy the soul is more full of light than ever and, on returning to itself, far from forgetting what has transpired, it remembers everything so faithfully that these things will never be erased from its memory. Thus the soul remains absorbed and possessed of the truths which were then communicated to it and with a jubilation so heavenly that it can find nothing but disgust in all things earthly. Secondly, in the natural "ecstasies" the soul is dejected and its infirmities are augmented; in divine ecstasies the soul is strengthened and filled with health and vigor, even when formerly it may have been weak and sickly.[60] Thirdly, by means of the very wounds and injuries of love which they produce in the soul, divine ecstasies leave it entirely transformed, vivified, regenerated, and deified, whereas the natural phenomena make the soul confused, degenerated, and stupefied.

These effects, so radically diverse, should be sufficient to show an absolute distinction between their causes. But there are other evident contrasts.

1. The convulsive movements that accompany natural "ecstasies" are disordered and indecorous and they expose one to great peril. But in the divine ecstasies a remarkable modesty and composure are always maintained and there is never any danger of harm, even though the person should fall into a fire. St. Catherine of Siena was withdrawn from red-hot coals without any burns, and even her clothing was unscorched.

2. In the natural states the crisis follows its normal course until it is resolved spontaneously, unless it is provoked and directed by hypnosis; but in the divine states, although the senses do not function, the subject, without hearing anything, returns to its senses when it is commanded to do so by one who has spiritual authority

60 *Life*, chap. 18: "This prayer, for however long it may last, does no harm; at least, it has never done any to me, nor do I ever remember feeling any ill effects after the Lord has granted me this favour, however unwell I may have been; indeed, I am generally much the better for it. What harm can possibly be done by so great a blessing? The outward effects are so noteworthy that there can be no doubt some great thing has taken place; we experience a loss of strength but the experience is one of such delight that afterwards our strength grows greater."

over it. But this does not happen if the authority is not legitimate, as, for example, when the authority is delegated and the person who delegates the power has retracted it. Sometimes a mere mental command is sufficient to obtain the same result. Yet it is not prudent to use these commands except for serious necessity, because of the great violence which the soul must exercise to return to normal and move its body, which is still rigid and cold. As a result of prompt obedience to these lawful commands, the soul afterward may feel great weakness, pain, and even dangers to health, sometimes even to the point of emitting blood from the mouth because of the great effort which was exerted.[61]

We should also note that even in the spiritual sleep the soul is able to return spontaneously to itself at the moment that some obligation presses, even though previously the soul had not thought of it. Thus some souls, having charge of important affairs, may have considered themselves incapable or have forgotten to undertake them, but they will remember them at the opportune moment and then, full of ability and prudence, they will accomplish their duties in a short time and with remarkable dispatch.[62]

61 See Gorres, *Mystique divine,* IV, chap. 2.

62 In spite of the usual rigidity and immobility, some souls speak and move around while in rapture, thus transmitting some of the light which they receive. St. Catherine of Siena and St. Magdalen of Pazzi spoke during their raptures, and in this way there could be written an account of their divine communications. St. Magdalen of Pazzi expressed herself with such rapidity and volubility that five or six scribes were required to write all that she said. She was also accustomed to walk when in this state. Many persons in this state appeared transfigured in a superhuman beauty or they shone with a heavenly light. Numerous examples can be found in Gorres, *loc. cit.,* chaps. 7 f., 21 f.

St. Catherine de Ricci not only became resplendent during her raptures, but they frequently overtook her in all manner of postures. When they overtook her during the processions as she carried the crucifix, she remained in the procession, stopping at the designated places, but she seemed to be walking on air. Sometimes she would fall into these states when in the company of those who visited her monastery. Many times she spoke and explained what she had seen or she made it known by her gestures and movements. For twelve years, from the age of 19 to 31 (1543-54), she had a weekly rapture which lasted for 28 hours, from 12 noon on Thursday until 4 o'clock of Friday afternoon, during which she suffered the whole sequence of the Passion. During the scourging she was convulsed with the severe lashings which she mysteriously felt, and sometimes it left her body black and blue.

Other saints also experienced prolonged and repeated ecstasies. St. Joseph of Cupertino had them almost continually; St. Thomas of Villanova, when once reciting the Office of the Ascension, was suspended in the air for twelve hours; Blessed Angela had ecstasies for three days at a time; Blessed Columba de Ricti, for five; Marina de Escobar, for six; St. Ignatius, for eight; St. Colette, for fifteen; St. Magdalen of Pazzi, for forty days (cf. Gorres, *op. cit.,* chap. 2-4). The ecstasies

3. Another difference is that natural ecstasies can be obtained or provoked. There are some persons who can experience them whenever they wish. But divine ecstasies are usually effected when least expected so that one could say that it would suffice to desire them in order not to have them.[63]

4. But the most notable difference is the great prudence and balance manifested by souls to whom God shows such favor, and above all, the light, fervor, and salutary changes which, as a result of these favors, they preserve all their lives. They receive and manifest the seal of the Savior who is the light of the world, whereas the other souls always bear a certain stigma of mental unbalance or degeneration.

Those who have been visibly favored with the wounds of Christ confound impartial science by their extraordinary manner of life. Such wounds can in no way be compared to the wounds that could be produced naturally or artificially. They are painful beyond compare and yet, though they cause momentarily a great faintness of spirit, in reality they console and revivify and are sources of superhuman energies.[64] They do not respond to any remedy and, great as they are, these wounds sometimes appear or disappear periodically of themselves, according to the mysteries

of Blessed Hosanna of Mantua were interrupted when it came time for Communion, for the Lord permitted her the use of her senses and movements for this act.

"Although St. Bernard says that ecstasies are of short duration," observes Father Thomas of Jesus *(Contempt, div.,* I, chap. 6) in accordance with Denis the Carthusian, "that is to be understood in regard to the weakness of the human mind and to that which happens more frequently, but not in regard to the divine clemency which sometimes preserves saints in rapture for long periods of time."

63 Some souls had ecstasies even in childhood, others were very tardy in experiencing them. According to Dr. Imbert *(La stigmat.,* II, 17), St. Hildegarde, Blessed Catherine de Racconigi, Blessed Dominica, and St. Catherine of Siena began to have ecstasies at the age of four; St. Peter Alcantara, Blessed Hosanna, St. Angela de Brescia, and Mother Inez of Jesus, at six; Blasa of Clatanisetta at seven; Christine of Stumbele at eleven; St. Inez of Montepulciano at fourteen; Mary of Agreda at eighteen; Veronica of Binasco at forty; and St. Teresa of Avila at forty-three. The Venerable Michaela de Aguirre received them at four and was then raised to the mystical espousal. But it is to be noted that some of these premature ecstasies which took place in souls that were not yet raised to the mystical union pertained essentially to the graces *gratis datae* and were therefore rather prophetic than mystical.

64 "My wounds," said St. Catherine of Siena to her confessor, "not only do not afflict my body, but they sustain and fortify it. I feel that what formerly depressed me, now invigorates me."

of the liturgical year.[65] They bleed profusely and, though they are very deep and almost continual, they never become gangrenous. They always remain fresh wounds, without any sign of suppuration and certainly no putrefaction, but they give off the sweetest odors. Frequently they are concentrated in the heart, without passing to the exterior, for the heart is the organ which is directly wounded by the divine darts. For that reason many contemplative souls suffer excruciating agonies in their hearts and they realize that it has been wounded physically. This was observed in many persons, as in the case of Venerable Martina of the Angels whose heart was examined after her death. Deep wounds were discovered there which, if they had been naturally inflicted, would have caused death a thousand times. Nevertheless such souls often live for years with these wounds and, although they cause terrible pain, from these same wounds come remarkable powers to occupy themselves with greater activity and zeal in all that pertains to the divine service.

We shall say nothing of the many other marvels in the lives of the saints which cannot be compared to anything natural. We wish to add a few words, however, about rapture accompanied by bilocation, for modern science is able to produce similar effects but not in the same manner nor with the same results, and still less from the same causes. Apart from the well-known cases of St. Nicholas of Myra, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Francis Xavier, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Blessed Peter Telmo, Blessed Martin de Portes, and others, whose presence was perceived in many places far removed from where their bodies were physically, there are remarkable incidents related about the above-mentioned Venerable Martina.[66] Like Catherine Emmerich, she many times presented herself in distant places for the good of her neighbor or Christianity. She passed over lands and seas in these mysterious journeys and afterward she was able to give an exact account of various objects and events in far-away places. She was also able to speak very intelligently about matters of navigation, though she had never seen the sea nor received any kind of instruction in these things.

65 These wounds disappeared from Michaela de Aguirre at the command of her Provincial.

66 See her *Life,* by Father Maya, Madrid, 1735.

Blessed Catherine of Racconigi also appeared many times and she used to let herself be seen very clearly when the necessities of her neighbor or the Church so required. She once appeared to a prince and threatened him on the part of God, leaving him in great consternation.®7 But one of the most remarkable and best authenticated cases is that of the Venerable .Mary of Agreda. In her great raptures, by reason of the extreme zeal which she had for the salvation of souls, she repeatedly appeared in New Mexico, preaching, catechizing, and converting thousands of Indians who later sought out missioners in order to be baptized. The fact of the matter is that these Indians were able to be baptized immediately and without any further instruction, for they were already well prepared. They told the missioners that from time to time a certain woman had come to teach and counsel them and then she would disappear, but they never knew where she went.

The strangeness of the case called for further investigations, and it was ultimately suspected that it might have been Venerable Agreda. When commanded under obedience, she told the truth of the affair; she gave a perfect description of all those remote regions and the intervening places, as if she had frequently traversed them. She was able to tell one of the missioners what he was doing among the Indians on a certain day and at a certain hour. She did not venture to say whether she had been there in the body or out of the body, but although she went there as if by flight, she felt herself to be there in reality and she could physically experience the changes in the climate and so on. Once when in this state she was distributing rosaries to the Indians, these rosaries disappeared forever from her cell, as if the journey and the giving had been physical realities.08

Modern science is able to offer us examples of telepathy which

67 See *Année Dominicaine,* September 5. St. Catherine de Ricci also frequently appeared to those who invoked her and she would console and defend them and even accompany them on perilous journeys. Thus she communicated with St. Magdalen of Pazzi and even more with St. Philip Neri. After her death, Philip described her with as much exactitude as if he had lived with her and he even commented that a certain picture did not resemble her, although he himself had never seen her bodily. The same thing occurred with Blessed Hosanna who described Palestine perfectly although she had never been there.

88 For further accounts, see her life by Samaniego. For similar accounts in the lives of other saints, see their biographies or Meric, *L'Imagination et les prod.,* and Gorres, *op. cit.*

are somewhat similar to these cases described above.[69] But even granting the existence of this entirely natural phenomenon—which sometimes gives suspicion of being diabolical—it almost always appears in neurotics or the mentally unbalanced, and we do not see that it produces any fruit. He who has eyes to see will observe how differently manifested are the works of nature from those of the Spirit, however much they may be confused by the profane. The raptures of the servants of God offer a grand analogy, indeed, an identity, with the deeds of St. Philip mentioned in Acts 8:26, 40.

Those who live according to the flesh, judge all things according to human prudence, which is carnal or worldly. They are unable to feel and understand the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5-7; I Cor. 2:14). So it is that, faced with the world of wonders in which souls live hidden with Christ in God, the animal man is ill at ease and makes use of puerile explanations when he sees that denial or disdain avails him nothing.[70]

69 Since there is such a similarity, spiritual directors are obliged to proceed with great caution and not to take for granted as divine, apparitions or visions from afar which certain spiritual persons are frequently accustomed to experience. These things may sometimes be the result of the psychological state in which these people find themselves and they may sometimes be reduced to an unusual case of telepathy. Let them look rather, as the Lord commands, to the fruits of sanctity, and then they will be able to see whether the tree is human or divine. Cf. Meric, *op. cit.*

70 When they notice the profound contrast existing between the divine and the human, even the most frantic rationalists begin to take flight and, fearful of placing themselves in ridicule, they no longer attempt to identify mystical phenomena with hysteria. Even Delacroix ("Dévelop. des états myst. chez Ste. Terese," in *Bull, de la Soc. fr. de phil.,* January, 1906) had to remark that it was not his intention to explain by hysteria all the events in a life so grand, so ample, and so beautiful as that of the saint. "To tell the truth," he adds, "this would not be an explanation, for one would have to show how and by what means these effects were produced by hysteria, which usually produces such opposite effects."

Montmorand ("Hystérie et myst.," in *Rev. philos.,* March, 1906, pp. 301-8) shows the contrasts between the life of this saint and that of neuropathic persons. The latter are voluble, capricious, inconstant, lacking in sense and penetration; whereas in St. Teresa there was quite evidently the good qualities of the delicacy of good sense, the sharpness of genius, energy, and constancy. "As regards the ecstasies of the mystics," he writes in the same review of July, 1905, "producing as they do certain very beneficial results, one has no right to confuse them with other states bearing the same name but which produce such contrary results."

As regards the wounds of the saints, which are mystically impressed in the midst of the most lofty contemplation, there is to be found in science nothing which even remotely resembles them. The stigmata produced by suggestion can almost always be reduced to a passing discoloration and seldom does it come to the sweating of drops of blood. The stigmata of the mystics produce deep and permanent wounds which sometimes affect even the heart. The former stigmata disappear after a short time, and we do not think that they cause any great suffering; those of the saints

But the saddest fact of all is that to the objections of the incredulous there is frequently added the systematic skepticism of many who consider themselves good Catholics, and some of these are religious and ecclesiastics. However much they invoke science and criticism and consider themselves to have a right and serene judgment which is not a victim of illusion, they do not avoid being deceived nor do they even try to hide it. They are very much contaminated with naturalism or they are filled with a mundane spirit and their Christian sense is atrophied and corrupted. If they possessed a pure Christian sense it is certain that they would better recognize the gifts of God.[71] They would never suppose, as they do suppose either implicitly or explicitly, that the divine arm is shortened and that the marvels so often realized in the early saints are no longer in existence. At most, they say, these marvels are repeated only in certain pious women who, however good they may be, do not offer sufficient proof of a sound critical judgment. But even if these graces were reserved only to women, that fact would prove only that in the conquest of the kingdom of God the weaker sex is more powerful than the stronger, and that, while many men are effeminate and degraded, many women march valiantly in the footsteps of the Savior and follow Him closely to enjoy His divine perfumes.[72]

Actually God is no acceptor of persons and He is pleased with all those who love and serve Him.[73] Therefore the Church has always had men and women saints of every condition and always will have. It is also certain that these saints will be in greater abundance as they are more necessary to arrest the growing wave of evil. The graces of that sovereign Spirit who through nations con-

do not disappear, except when they are periodic stigmata, and then they are renewed in their proper time and they cause suffering which is at once excruciating and sweet and this suffering becomes a source of strength. Furthermore, as distinct from the pathological wounds, which follow their natural course, the mystical wounds (excepting those of St. Rita from the thorns), however deep and lasting, do not suppurate nor give off a bad odor nor cause any morbid alteration. Sometimes, indeed, they exhale a sweet perfume. Human science is unable to give an explanation of these mysteries as can be seen from the profound studies of Dr. Imbert, *Stigmatis,* II, chap. 6, 14, and of Gombault, *L'lmagin.,* IV, chap. 2.

71 I Cor. 2:12-16.

72 "Alas!" exclaimed St. Jerome *(Epist. 46 ad Rufimmf),* "the weaker sex has conquered the world, and the more robust sex is conquered by the world."

73 Acts 10:34.

veys Himself into holy souls and makes the friends of God and prophets [74] will never be exhausted and never can be. So it is that there must ever be contemplative souls who will raise in their hearts the mystical ladder by which they ascend from virtue to virtue until they see their God and converse with Him in a stupendous familiarity. There will also always be other souls who, apart from the graces which ordinarily accompany the mystical life, will receive the charisms and extraordinary gifts (prophecies, miracles, the gift of tongues, and the like) which are primarily directed to the good of others and the general well-being of the Church. The Lord grants those remarkable favors when they are least thought of, thus to confound the incredulous. They are signs, not for the faithful, but for the unbelievers. The great saints possessed these extraordinary graces frequently and even without adverting to them.[75] Christ promised that His followers would realize equal and even greater prodigies than His own.[78] But the energetic critics of these marvelous favors forget this fact.

God gives graces *gratis datae* and extraordinary favors to whomever he wishes and distributes them according to His good pleasure (I Cor. 12:11). But the gifts which generally accompany the mystical repose to which He invites all souls,[77] are given, sooner or later, to all who faithfully persevere in seeking it by means of continual abnegation, recollection, and vigilance over the senses. In this state no distinction exists between men and women. He imposes His yoke upon all and commands all to follow Him, each one carrying his own cross, under the penalty of being unworthy of Him.[78] To all He offers the fount of living water [79] and on all

14 Wisd. 7:27.

15 "In the history of the saints," observes Chauvin, "there is ordinarily found a whole series of phenomena such as visions, ecstasies, prophecies, miracles, etc., which, although they are not essential to sanctity, seem to be necessary in these biographies, for there will scarcely be found one saint who did not experience such things. . . . Even among the saints in whom there are not found raptures or visions, they are few (indeed, none!) who did not reach infused contemplation. . . . The lives of the ancient saints are like a litany of miracles. . . . Today the Church requires the evidence of some of these graces in order to recognize officially the sanctity of a person and to raise him to the altars. . . . Certain gratuitous favors are so lofty that they are possessed only by the saints and they become the proper privilege of those saints" (*Qu'est-ce qu'un Saint,* pp. 37, 44, 53).

76 John 14:12.

77 Matt. 11:29; Heb. 4:11.

78 Matt. 10:38.

78 Isa. 53:1; John 7:37-39.

He is pleased to pour forth in abundance the gifts of His Spirit.[80]

We have sufficiently numerous and recent examples of this in Venerable Hoyos, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, Blessed James of Cadiz, St. John Bosco, Blessed Anthony Claret, and the remarkable St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars. There are still other servants of God whose causes of beatification have been completed or are far advanced.[81] If, as St. Teresa noted [82] and St. Peter Alcantara recognized, the favors of contemplation more abound in humble women, the reason is, in part, that God usually selects that which is most weak in the eyes of the world in order to confound those who presume to be strong, especially in spirit, when actually they lack the Spirit.[83] Another part of the reason is that many pious men, necessarily engaged in the heavy labors of the apostolate, do not have at their disposal, as they would like, sufficient time to experience and enjoy the sweetness of intimate concourse with God. But God reserves these things in great abundance for the end of their lives.[84] Another important reason is that many women are actually more devout, and for that reason the Church speaks of them, not as the weak sex, but as the devout sex. Women are, as a rule, more given to prayer, more constant in

80 Jas. 1:5; Joel 2:28-39.

81 Those who suppose that there are no saints today should remember that there are many nineteenth-century persons who have been raised to the altars and among them four Spanish Dominicans of the Holy Rosary Province who suffered martyrdom in Indo-China. Further there were in 1908, 287 cases for beatification pending, half of which pertained to people of the nineteenth century. The person who believes that sanctity is proper to women or that it has disappeared from religious institutes should consider that of the 287 cases mentioned above, 207 are men and 239 are members of religious communities.

The reader will be familiar also with the recent canonization of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, who lived and worked in the United States. It will also be of interest to point out that the Master General of the Dominican Order, the Most Reverend Manuel Suarez, O.P., has appointed a committee of investigation to begin the work of preparing the documents for the beatification of Father Arintero. [Tr.]

82 *Life,* chap. 40.

83 See I Cor. 1:27-29.

84 Godinez, *Teologta Mistica,* Ill, 6: "The contemplation which God gives as a reward to recollected souls after some period of abandonment, He is wont to communicate as a consolation ... to those valiant captains of the mixed life. ... I knew some missionaries (chap. 7) to whom God communicated loftiest heights of infused contemplation, and they reaped in their privacy what they had sown with great fatigue on the missions. One of them, I know, was for three days and three nights in ecstasy."

desolation, more persevering in recollection, more vigilant in guarding their senses, more docile to the guidance of their spiritual director, and more solicitous in procuring perfect purity of heart by which they are disposed to hear and follow better the motions and inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

Against these advantages, which every experienced confessor or director will admit, many women suffer the disadvantage of not being sufficiently simple and sincere and of being too much taken up with consolations. Hence they are extremely susceptible to fall into illusions. Given an equality of apparent virtue in a man and a woman, that of the man usually inspires more confidence. It is proverbial that in women there is often found that duplicity from which the divine Spirit flees [85] and from which the evil one draws so much advantage. Many women have a secret desire to be esteemed as favored by God, to be regarded as saints by their directors, and to be preferred to others who actually are saints. These vain desires, attachments, and fixations, which are a continual source of jealousy and rancor, are the cause of the disdain which has been visited upon both true visionaries and the falsely devout. They put into disrepute virtue itself and the many faithful souls who have successfully triumphed over all their weaknesses.

Sometimes the natural weaknesses of women need to be consoled by greater comforts. But actually, if they try to be faithful and to proceed in all simplicity and sincerity, they will receive consolations in even greater abundance because to a certain extent they will then merit them the more or they will be better disposed to receive them and profit from them. A woman's heart is generally more loving, more sensitive, and more delicate, and this condition helps them the better to feel and evaluate the worth of the divine love which manifested itself so humanly in the works of the whole life and passion of our Redeemer. Experiencing the sweet odor of His name, they run after Him and love Him to marvelous excesses.[86] Well could our Lord reserve for them certain charisms and extraordinary favors, for He has denied to them

[85] Wisd. 1:5; Prov. 3:20; Osee 10:2; Jas. 1:8.
[86] Cant. 1:2.

His priesthood and the imponderable value of the celebration of Mass.[87]

How many saintly women have excelled in purity of heart and perseverance in prayer and as a result have been able to experience and penetrate the divine truths perhaps better than anyone else! Who has ever spoken of the attributes of God, the unction of the Holy Ghost, and the dark contemplation as did Blessed Angela of Foligno? Who has ever written of the mystery of the Incarnation as did St. Magdalen of Pazzi or of the sweet enchantments of the sacred humanity of Christ as did St. Gertrude? Who can compare with St. Catherine of Genoa in speaking of the purifications of the soul; with St. Catherine of Siena in speaking of the power of divine love? Who has ever explained supernatural psychology as did St. Teresa, and who has spoken of the hidden mysteries of the life of our Lord and Our Lady as did Agreda and Emmerich? [88]

Those who disparage the marvels of the supernatural order because they see that they are preferably found in women are confounded by the examples mentioned above. Certain it is that we must be on our guard in order not to become victims of illusions, fraud, and deceit; this cannot be achieved by following prudence of the flesh, but only the prudence of the spirit.[89] It is assured by

87 Agreda, *The Mystical City of God,* chap. 14: "Wise men will not be surprised that women should be so singularly favored with these gifts for, in addition to their being fervent in their love, God selects the weakest things as the best proof of His power."

88 St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God,* Preface: "Mystical writings are aided more by the devotion of lovers than by the doctrines of the wise. So it is that the Holy Ghost desired that certain women should treat of these things. Who better expressed the heavenly mysteries of sacred love than St. Catherine of Genoa, Blessed Angela of Foligno, St. Catherine of Siena, or St. Matilda?"

"When one loves God more ardently, so much the more fully does He reveal Himself as beloved, and when this love is more flaming, the knowledge of divine things is more profound and more acute. For the things that are closer to us are more easily known and by love God is made most close to us for love can transform us into God. When, therefore, an ardent love reaches that degree which knowledge is unable to attain, those who love God ardently know Him more fully then they could by possessing a piercing intellect. . . . This ardent love, says St. Bonaventure, is formally a certain affective or experimental knowledge. . . . Thus St. Bernard *(super Cant.)* says: 'Whatever we know of Thy innermost secrets, O Lord, we know either from Scripture or from Thee revealing or, certainly, (and this belongs to the perfect) by taste; that is, we are taught by experience' " (Ven. Bartholomew of the Martyrs, *Comp, myst. doct.,* chap. 24). See also St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue,* chap. 85.

89 Directors incapable of knowing the things of the spirit, who contradict and condemn contemplative souls because they do not understand them, seeing them

invoking the Father of all lights, yearning and begging for the mystical sense,[90] and striving to purify the eyes of the heart so that they will be able to be illumined and will not remain in the darkness of death.[91] Those who attempt to judge these marvels with only human eyes cannot avoid erring greatly, regarding as of little or no value those precious pearls that are not for them.[92] They presume on their own knowledge of refined critical sense and deem that they are able to judge of the things of God better than the saints themselves who were filled with the sense of Christ. Then, depreciating the marvelous lives of the just, they will eventually have to admit, in spite of themselves, that they were mad.[93] How true it is that the spiritual man judges all things and cannot be understood, much less, judged, by any psychologist![94]

APPENDIX

1. The Divine Ecstasies

Interior Castle, sixth mansions, chap. 4:

[Ecstasy] is not like one who suffers a swoon or a paroxysm so that it can understand nothing either within itself or without. . . . The soul has never before been so fully awake to the things of God or had such light or such knowledge of His Majesty. . . . When the soul is in this state of suspension and the Lord sees fit to reveal to it certain mysteries, such as heavenly things and imaginary visions, it is able subsequently to describe these, for they are so deeply impressed upon the memory that they can never again be forgotten. But when they are intellectual visions they cannot be so described; for at these times come visions of so sublime

proceed with all simplicity and humility, are usually the first to give credence to deluded souls. Even though these souls are in good faith, they proceed with deceit and craftiness to find any kind of support, even if it be that of a fool.

The Living Flame, stanza 3, verse 4: "Those persons who are not spiritual enough to be purged of their desires and pleasures, but still . . . follow their animal nature . . . may think much of the base and vile things of the spirit, which are those that come nearest to the sensual condition wherein they still live, and they will consider them to be of great importance; while those things that are lofty and spiritual . . . they will count of small importance and not esteem them."

90 Wisd. 7:7.

91 Jas. 1:5-17; Eph. 1:17 f.; Ps. 12:4; 17:29; 18:9; Apoc. 3:18.

92 Matt. 7:6.

93 Wisd. 5:4.

94 1 Cor. 2:15.

a kind that it is not fitting for those who live on earth to understand them in such a way that they can describe them; although after regaining possession of their senses they can often describe many of these intellectual visions. . . . Oh, daughters, the profit is so great that it cannot be exaggerated, for, although one cannot describe these favours, they are clearly imprinted in the very depths of the soul and they are never forgotten. . . . But, although relief comes, the ecstasy has the effect of leaving the will so completely absorbed and the understanding so completely transported—for as long as a day, or even for several days—that the soul seems incapable of grasping anything that does not awaken the will to love; to this it is fully awake, while asleep as regards all that concerns attachment to any creature.

Oh, what confusion the soul feels when it comes to itself again and what ardent desires it has to be used for God in any and every way in which He may be pleased to employ it! . . . Such a soul would gladly have a thousand lives so as to use them all for God, and it would like everything on earth to be tongue so that it might praise Him. It has tremendous desires to do penance; and whatever penance it does it counts as very little, for its love is so strong that it feels everything it docs to be of very small account and realizes clearly that it was not such a great matter for the martyrs to suffer all their tortures, for with the aid of Our Lord such a thing becomes easy. And thus these souls make complaint to Our Lord when He offers them no means of suffering. . . . It seems that Our Lord wants everyone to realize that such a person's soul is now His and that no one must touch it. People arc welcome to attack her body, her honour, and her possessions, for any of these attacks will be to His Majesty's honour. But her soul they may not attack, for . . . He will protect it from the whole world, and indeed from all hell.

2. The Marvels of God in the Weaker Sex

Weiss, *Apologie,* X, conf. 23:

Although we should proceed with a certain caution in regard to the marvels of God within ourselves, we cannot approve of those who shorten the arm of God and believe that these things are no longer realized in modern times and that therefore they are to be found only in simple women. . . . What! Women! Are they perhaps weak beings, those women who so energetically restrained their passions, performed heroic mortifications, and served God with all fidelity? (Rivera, *Vita S. Theresae,* pp. 1, 2, 37). It is certainly not a reproach to them to say that they alone walk along the way of perfection with a manly seriousness.

Nor is it any shame to Christianity that it fills with heroic women and virgins the vacancies left by men who have deserted. Should not those men feel ashamed of their weakness, rather than insult such women and depreciate the teaching which God gives to them, showing Himself to be great in little things and making strong that which is weak? (Blessed Raymond, *Vita S. Catharinae Senensis,* 2, 11, 12). Let no one attribute to himself the gift of God who gives to whom He pleases (Rom. 9:18; Heb. 5:4). And no one has any right to ask Him why He acts thus. God has given to men the priesthood, the mission of preaching, the public apostolate, and so on. Men have enough honors, obligations, and responsibilities. In what way is it prejudicial to men if God gives to women the task of ornamenting His Church and for this purpose bestowing on them certain extraordinary gifts? . . . In times when many men fled from the Church and only a few Nicodemuses came by night to converse with Jesus; when even the servants of the sanctuary were paralyzed with fear and could do nothing but keep silent and follow the dictates of carnal prudence; when the faith was despised and adherence to the Church had become an object of ridicule and when mortification and piety were considered old women's fables; it seems to us that such times were the most fitting for God to come to the aid of His Church by extraordinary gifts. . . . Each year that we approach closer to the end of time we are made to see more clearly that we have great need of saints and miracles. . . . Miracles can be compared to honor, which is the shadow of virtue, for a miracle is the shadow of sanctity. A shadow flees from him who pursues it and it obstinately clings to the steps of him who flees from it. The miraculous pursues the saints as if to recompense them for the solicitude with which they strive to avoid it.

CHAPTER VII

Visions and Locutions

SSSs5SSs5SSsSSSs5SSs5SSs5SSs5$$s5SSs5SSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSs5SSsSSSsiSSsSSSsSSSsSSSs&5SSsSSSs5SSs5SSsSSs

APART from the phenomena already referred to, which are ordinarily manifested in the progressive phases of contemplation, there are others which are less indispensable and which do not seem to be a necessary part of that progress. Of themselves they do contribute to its development,, but they can also prove to be obstacles. They vary greatly or may be absent altogether. For that reason we call them epiphenomena. They are related in a certain way to the series of graces *gratis datae* which do not always presuppose sanctity nor necessarily sanctify the one who possesses them. Indeed, they are sometimes compatible with grave sins, as when they are expressly directed to the common good.[1] These graces, since they are not necessary, but are useful, and since they are dangerous to a certain degree, although good in themselves, must never be desired, according to the doctrine which is current today. Therefore simple and upright souls fear them and avoid them as much as possible, lest they be an occasion of vanity and ruin.

Nevertheless, if they arc received with humility and fear and are not desired with presumption and vanity, and if they are used well, they can be powerful means for animating the soul and moving it to love and gratitude. Usually the one whom they first benefit is the one who possesses them. Therefore, although some of these phenomena are at times granted to evil persons, just as is the priesthood sometimes conferred on unworthy candidates, ordinarily only very good souls receive them.[2]

1 See St. Thomas, *In III Sent.*, dist. 13, q.z, a.z; *In I Cor.*, lect. *1.*
2 See Chauvin, *loc. cit.;* Blessed James of Cadiz, *Vida Interior,* III, 11.

Among these graces which are properly graces *gratis datae* are the working of wonders and cures, the gift of tongues, of prophecy, of discernment of spirits, and so on. Since these gifts are directly ordained to the good of others, they are comparatively rare. Those which are more frequent, so that they are almost ordinary in the generality of mystics, are certain visions and locutions which are directly ordained to animate, console, direct, illumine, or rectify the souls themselves, although they may sometimes pertain also to other persons.[3]

The last-mentioned gifts, therefore, although they are in a certain manner related, or seem to be related, to the gift of prophecy, cannot in all rigor be called graces *gratis datae* as were the former gifts. Actually they are simple types of illumination which are accommodated, as St. John of the Cross remarks,[4] to the state and condition of certain contemplative souls. As such, they are important helps to one's sanctification and they should never be despised or depreciated, however much it may be necessary to consider them with the greatest suspicion and caution and always with extreme disinterestedness.

By these divine illustrations the eyes of the heart begin to be illumined in a more distinct manner. The Apostle desires that all the faithful should have such eyes when he begs for all of them the Spirit of revelation so that they can better respond to the8

[3] *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 24: "But over and above these graces freely bestowed, what we say is that persons who are perfect or are making progress in perfection are wont very ordinarily to receive enlightenment and knowledge of things present or absent; these they know through their spirit, which is already enlightened and purged. . . . We can interpret that passage from the Proverbs in this sense, namely: . . . Even as there appear in the waters the faces of those that look therein, so the hearts of men are manifest to the prudent (Prov. 27:19). This is understood of those that have the wisdom of saints, which the sacred Scripture calls prudence. . . . But it must be known that those whose spirits are purged can learn by natural means with great readiness, and some more readily than others, that which is in the inward spirit or heart, and the inclinations and talents of men, and this by outward indications, albeit very slight ones, as words, movements and other signs . . . according to the words of the Apostle, who says: . . . He that is spiritual judgeth all things (I Cor. 2:15). . . . For it will come to pass that, when a person is inattentive to a matter and it is far from his mind, there will come to him a vivid understanding of what he is hearing or reading, and that much more clearly than it could be conveyed by the sound of words; and at times, though he understand not the words, as when they are in Latin and he knows not that tongue, the knowledge of their meaning comes to him, despite his not understanding them."

[4] *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* Bk. II, chaps. 11, 17.

divine call, see how rich is the glorious heritage of Jesus Christ in His saints, recognize His sovereign grandeur, and admire the treasures of science and wisdom which are contained in Him and the prodigies of charity which surpass all knowledge. In this way will they be filled with the plenitude of God.[5]

More often this illumination is effected, as the Venerable Palaphox points out,[0] by inspirations, motions, or secret illustrations rather than by clear and distinct visions and locutions. But by the very fact that visions and locutions produce marvelous effects, it seems to be fitting or almost necessary on some occasions that they be clarified and perfected and at the same time testify to the soul that this light comes to it entirely from God. For, as the Angelic Doctor teaches,[7] the soul does not usually have certitude of this fact except when the illumination is distinct.

It is true that some respected authors, in order to protect souls from vain curiosity and to keep them humble, say that these gifts are never to be desired and never to be sought, but rather that these lights are to be renounced. But in this matter we think that they are guilty of exaggeration or a dangerous confusion which should be dispelled. It would be unlawful to desire them, as often happens, when this desire springs from vanity, curiosity, or attachment to such things. But it is never unlawful when they are desired or sought as means of knowing, loving, and serving God better and of acquiring more distaste for the things of the world. Since these lights are such excellent and profitable helps, as St. Teresa repeatedly states,[8] they cannot be other than desirable in themselves, although they should not be sought by those who are in no condition to use them or those who would abuse them or become too attached to them, as if in them were to be found the fruit of sanctification.

6 Eph. 1:17-19; 3:18 f.

8 *Varan de deseos,* III, 5.

7 IIa IIae, q. 171, a. 5: "The prophet's mind is instructed by God in two ways: in one way by an express revelation, in another way by a most mysterious instinct to which the human mind is subjected without knowing it, as Augustine says *(Gen. ad lit.,* II, 17). Accordingly the prophet has the greatest certitude about those things which he knows by an express revelation, and he has it for certain that they are revealed to him by God. . . . On the other hand, his position with regard to the things he knows by instinct is sometimes such that he is unable to distinguish fully whether his thoughts are conceived of Divine instinct or of his own spirit."

8 *Life,* chaps. 28 f.; *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap. 9.

But the Apostle very much recommends not only that one should esteem these lights, but that he should strive for them,9 and the Psalmist begs for them in these words: "Send forth Thy light and Thy truth, O Lord, for they have attracted me and led me to Thy holy mountain." 10 In this light and truth we are well able to understand the divine visions and locutions which, as St. John of the Cross says *(loc. cit.),* are the ordinary way by which the Lord usually leads souls from the sensible to the spiritual. Indeed to the more generous and detached souls He communicates things that are purely of the spirit, omitting those other means that may prove a hindrance to them.11

It is through visions of one sort or another that the Lord begins truly to shine forth in His servants and it is by means of locutions that He directs them in all their works so that they may be more perfect and to His liking.12 That the soul may hear the mysterious

9 See I Cor. 14:1-5, 12, 39.

10 Poulain, *op. cit.,* p. 333: "The repulsion which one ought to feel for visions must not extend to those which are *indeicae,* that is to say, of the divinity, for these are a type of mystical union." The other visions, if well received, dispose for these latter and are of themselves ordained to them. Cajetan teaches (/w *Ila llae,* q.95, a.4) that the apparitions of angels and saints constitute the beginning of happiness: *Ad initium coelestis felicitatis, et Patriae spectat conversatio in hac vita cum Angelis, atit Sanctis apparentibus quandoque nobis.* Therefore, when they are received with humility and one is not unduly attached to them, their effects are very profitable, as all admit. St. Teresa remarks *(Foundations,* chap. 8) that when a soul is humble no vision, even if it be of the enemy, can harm the soul; but on the other hand, if the soul is not humble, it uses all visions to its own injury.

11 For this reason St. John rigorously censures those directors as "miracle-mongers" who are too much attached to sensible revelations and almost seem to measure sanctity by such things. However much they dissimulate, such directors are always giving souls an occasion for vanity and pride and causing them to be excessively attached to and fond of such favors, thereby incapacitating them to advance farther. (See *op. cit.,* chap. 18.)

12 Ps. 89:17. Alvarez de Paz, *De grad, contempt.,* Ill, 6: "The soul in union, and even in other states, ... is wont to hear God speaking to it in a special manner, and this speaking is of great benefit to it. . . . It is very evident from the Scriptures and from the Fathers that God frequently speaks to His own in a singular manner."

St. Bernard, *Serm. de mult, utilit. verbi Dei:* "The divine word sounding in the ears of the soul disturbs and terrifies it, but later, if this voice is heeded, it vivifies, melts, inflames, illumines, and cleanses the soul. . . . The sinner will hear it, and his bowels will tremble, and his carnal soul will quake. For it examines and judges all the secrets of the heart, this living and efficacious scrutinizer of hearts and thoughts. Whence it is rightfully said of him who is dead in sin: *Si audieris vocem Filii Dei vives.* ... If thy heart is obdurate, remember the words of Scripture: 'He shall send out His word, and shall melt them' (Ps. 147:18). ... If thou art lukewarm and have fear of being vomited forth, do not depart from the word of God, and it will inflame thee, for His word is fire indeed. If thou art plagued with

voice with which He often deigns to speak to the heart, He raises the soul to a mystical solitude.[13] While in that state the soul must be attentive if it is to hear, understand, and follow what the Spirit says to it. It must not harden its heart, otherwise it will not enter into the divine rest.[14] The enamored soul cannot help but sigh for the heavenly Spouse and be cast into an ecstasy on hearing His sweet voice.[15]*And when He is absent from it, the soul goes forth in search of Him with heartfelt sighs, asking where He dwells, where He pastures and rests.[16]

Thus does the Lord manifest His face and His mercy for the light and salvation of His faithful ones; for this favor the Psalmist pleads with much insistence.[17] So also we should not only beg Him sincerely to teach us to do His holy will,[18] but also be attentive in order to hear what He deigns to speak to us, for He speaks words of peace to His saints and to all those who are converted in their hearts,[19] so that they may live recollected in Him and strive for perfect purity.[20]

These interior illuminations and locutions, although sometimes

the darkness of ignorance, diligently heed what the Lord God speaks in thee, and the word of God will be a lamp for thy feet. The more thou grievest, the more clearly dost thou recognize thy sins, even the smallest of them. But the Father will sanctify thee in truth, which is also His word, so that thou wilt merit to hear with the apostles: 'Now you are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.' . . . Behold He has prepared a table in thy sight so that thou wilt not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God and in the strength of His bread thou wilt walk the way of His commandments. . . . Persevere in them and exercise thyself in them continually until the Spirit shall tell thee to rest from thy labors. In this word wilt thou rest sweetly and thou wilt sleep blissfully until the hour comes when all who are in their tombs will hear His voice."

13 Osee 2:14.

14 Ps. 94:11; Heb. 3:11; 4: i–11.

16 Cant. 1:1; 2:8-10; 5:6.

18 Cant, i:6; 3:2.

17 Ps. 79:4-20; 84:7 f.

18 Ps. 142:10.

19 Ps. 84:9.

20 The Psalms never cease to recommend to us that we seek the face of the Lord: "See His face evermore" (104:4) and to beg Him to manifest His face and never to depart from us: "My heart hath said to Thee: My face hath sought Thee: Thy face, O Lord, will I still seek. Turn not away Thy face from me" (26:8 f.). See also 101:3; 142:7. "Why turnest Thou Thy face away?" (43:24.) "I entreated Thy face with all my heart" (118:58). "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant" (118:135). "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life, Thou shalt fill me with joy with Thy countenance" (15:11).

manifested exteriorly, are ordained especially to one's own sanctification.[21] In this they differ from prophecy, which consists in the manifestation of divine mysteries, the future, or that which is in the hearts of others, and it is directed to the general edification of the Church as a whole.[22] Some of the favors which are graces *gratis datae* and not *gratum facientes* are usually found in true saints, although they may be distributed, some being manifested in certain saints and others in other saints. The Lord grants His gifts to each one as He sees fit.[23] But without participating somehow in these gifts, according to the present discipline of the Church, no servant of God can be declared a saint.

What is important, then, is not to attach the heart to these means, especially as regards favors and consolations. That would be tantamount to seeking self and forgetting the Giver for His gifts. The gifts are of value only so far as they lead one to the service of the Lord. When these lights are lacking, then the soul should consider itself undeserving of them and should at the same time purify the heart in order to receive them with profit when God sees fit to grant them. When these gifts are granted, the soul should be grateful for His mercy and should strive to draw from them the desired fruit, without becoming too attached to the consolations that accompany them. But whoever desires and seeks these gifts with selfishness and through vanity, rather than being favored

21 Palaphox, *Varan de deseos,* III, 5: "In the spiritual life there are three ways of receiving interior communication from God. The first, in which the soul speaks of God; the second, in which the soul speaks to God; the third, in which the soul hears God." 1 his last one, he says, corresponds principally to the unitive way, in which the soul hears, understand, obeys, loves, and burns; just as in the purgative way the soul speaks of God because the heart cannot help but send to the lips the little love it possesses, and in the illuminative way the soul speaks with God because its life is more interior and silent. The locutions of God, he adds, work marvelous results.

"Therefore does Thomas a Kempis exclaim (III, chaps. 1-2), Blessed is the soul which hears God speaking within it and receives from His mouth the words of comfort. Blessed are the ears which receive the currents of the divine whisperings. . . . Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. . . . Incline my heart to the words of Thy mouth and let Thy words rain down like dew. . . . Speak not to me, Moses or any of the prophets, but speak Thou, the inspirer and illuminator of all the prophets. . . . For Thou hast the words of eternal life. Speak to me for the comfort of my soul and for the remedy of my whole life." Cf. St. Augustine, *Soliloq.,* 1; *Ccmfestions,* IV, 11; VII, 10.

22 See I Cor. 12:7; 14:41.

23 See I Cor. 12:7-11; St. Thomas, *loc. cit.*

by God, will be very much in danger, as St. John of the Cross wisely observes,[24] of becoming the plaything of the illusions of his own imagination and of the snares of the enemy.

The better to see which mercies are more profitable and desirable and the way these things can and ought to be sought from God; in order also to point out which are dangerous and to be considered with no little fear and with a complete disinterest (as simple means which are of value only as they aid souls), let us see how many are the forms of illumination.

Both visions and locutions are of three classes: i. sensible or external, that is, perceptible by sight or hearing; 2. imaginative, not perceptible by the external senses, but only by the imagination; 3. purely intellectual, not perceptible by any sense, either external or internal, but received directly in the intelligence, as spiritual concepts, void of every kind of sensible image or symbol.[25][26]

The first type is common to beginners, who have not yet succeeded in withdrawing themselves entirely from the external senses and have not been completely stripped of the desire for sensible consolations. The second type is proper to the more advanced, who have purged their sensitive faculties but still require the help or attraction of this kind of light and consolation. The third is that of the perfect, who have purged the potencies of the soul and are capable of receiving purely spiritual illustrations. All the other kinds of illustrations are ordained to this third type and they are fitting or necessary so far as they serve as means more suitable to one's condition so that in the interim the spiritual light of the intelligence is received with greater profit.[28]

[24] *Op. cit.,* chap. 11.

[25] See St. John of the Cross, *op. cit.,* chap. 10; Agreda, *The Mystical City of God,* I, II, 14.

[26] From what has been said, one can see that the rule which held so much authority for many centuries; namely, that visions and locutions should not be desired, but should be feared and despised, is of no value *per se,* although it may sometimes be true *per accidens,* because of the hidden presumption, vanity, or curiosity which is frequently mixed with such desires. But since these things are good and useful in themselves, it cannot be otherwise than *per se* they should be desirable. For that reason St. Paul repeatedly advises that these things be desired and much appreciated. He says to the Corinthians: "Follow after charity, be zealous for spiritual gifts; but rather that you may prophesy. . . . He that speaketh in a tongue (locutions), edifieth himself: but he that prophesieth, edifieth the Church. And I would have you all to speak with tongues, but rather to prophesy" (I Cor. 14:1-5). Later, he adds: "Wherefore, brethren, be zealous to prophesy: and forbid

From this consideration one will readily see how innocent are those persons who say, "So and so is a saint; for he has seen the Blessed Virgin, or the Child Jesus," and so forth. If the favor is certain (and there seems no indication of its being so if it is made public in such a way), it rather indicates that the favored one is still a beginner; for if he were perfect, the vision ordinarily would be an intellectual one.[27] In the intellectual vision, though no sensible form or image intervenes, all objects are seen, even material ones, more clearly beyond compare than they could be seen with the eyes. Since there is such clarity and since it is an illustration most lofty and proper to perfect souls, no illusion or fraud is ever present nor is there the slightest danger of vanity.[28]

This excellent type of vision and locution, or spiritual knowledge, since it is the most lofty and pure form of clear and distinct illumination, is seldom lacking in a soul which has arrived at true and complete union, for such illustrations, according to St. Teresa, characterize and in a manner constitute the ecstatic union. That is why they should be placed in the group of phenomena which is ordinary to contemplation. For the same reason, although it would

not to speak with tongues" (*ibid.*, 39). To the Thessalonians he makes these observations: "Extinguish not the spirit. Despise not prophecies" (I Thess. 5:19!.).

Therefore that cannot be otherwise than desirable which is so much recommended by the Apostle. It is only to be feared when it is not sought or used properly. In regard to the intellectual illustrations which, besides the fact that they offer not the slightest danger, directly contribute to illumination and union, there is no reason why they should not be desired and sought and esteemed as they deserve, as St. John of the Cross gives us to understand. The sensible communications are simply special forms of illumination which, since they are more accommodated to human needs and conditions, are usually of great profit to beginners who proceed in good faith, animated with great desires and with great disinterest. Proceeding in this way, they do not suffer the risks of those who are attached to such things. When by these means the soul has been sufficiently spiritualized, it will receive other superior lights which are proper to perfect men. So it is seen that in certain generous, pure, and magnanimous souls in which these helps are not needed, the illumination is almost from the very beginning more spiritual and there are scarcely any sensible manifestations to which the soul may become attached.

27 There are, nevertheless, exceptions in this regard. St. Teresa began to have intellectual visions for quite some time, but she believes that she had gained much through the later imaginative visions wherein the divine truths were made more accessible to her.

28 Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* Part VII, chap. 4, art. 5: Contemplation "is certain; because its objects are the supernatural truths which the divine light discloses to it; and when this disclosure is made immediately to the understanding, it is nor liable to error. When it is made either through the senses or through the imagination, some illusion may at times mix with it."

be presumption to desire these graces if one were not yet in a condition to receive them, when God mercifully grants them they are most useful and they offer not the slightest reason for fear and no danger to the soul. Nature of itself can in no way produce such visions and locutions, because our natural knowledge is always accompanied by sensible images. Neither can the enemy faithfully imitate them, for he also, to work upon our intelligence, must accommodate himself to its natural condition which requires the accompanying phantasm. On the other hand, these visions and locutions contribute very efficaciously to the progress of the soul, for in an instant they fill it with a light and affections which are far superior to any that the soul could attain by its own efforts even after many years of endeavor. They do not lead the soul to vanity; rather they leave it humbled and confused, making it realize its own nothingness and knowing that such prodigious fruits do not proceed from its own invention.[29]

Though imaginative visions at times prove more profitable to souls, yet, in the opinion of St. Teresa,[30] because they are more in conformity with our natural condition, they are of themselves of

[29] *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap, to: "It may happen that the soul will be at prayer, and in possession of all its senses, and that then there will suddenly come to it a suspension in which the Lord communicates most secret things to it, which it seems to see within God Himself. . . . Although I say that the soul 'sees' Him, it really sees nothing, for this is not an imaginary, but a notably intellectual, vision, in which is revealed to the soul how all things arc seen in God, and how within Himself He contains them all. Such a vision is highly profitable because, although it passes in a moment, it remains engraven upon the soul."

[30] *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap. 9: Imaginary visions "seem to me in some ways more profitable because they are in closer conformity with our nature. . . . When Our Lord is pleased to bestow greater consolations upon this soul, He grants it, in whatever way He thinks best, a clear revelation of His sacred Humanity . . . and although He docs this so quickly that we might liken the action to a flash of lightning, this most glorious image is so deeply engraven upon the imagination that I do not believe it can possibly disappear until it is seen where it can be enjoyed to all eternity.

"I speak of an 'image,' but it must not be supposed that one looks at it as at a painting; it is really alive, and sometimes even speaks to the soul and shows it things both great and secret. . . . When the soul is able to remain for a long time looking upon the Lord, I do not think it can be a vision at all. It must rather be that some striking idea creates a picture in the imagination: but this will be a dead image by comparison with the other."

Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, chap. 16: "These imaginary visions come more frequently to proficients than do outward and bodily visions . . . for imaginary visions are subtler and produce a deeper impression upon the soul. . . . Nevertheless, it is true that some of these exterior bodily visions may produce a deeper impression; the communication, after all, is as God wills."

less efficacy. Moreover, they are always very much subject to deception. This is so because, on the one hand, they can be imitated, as they frequently are, by the devil or by nature; on the other hand, although they are lawful, they are often misunderstood and wrongly interpreted, especially at the beginning.

But sensible visions, although by their nature even less efficacious, are more secure because, though the devil can imitate them by transforming himself into an angel of light, it is not so difficult to detect the fraud and there is no danger that a sane and well-balanced mind will be hallucinated to the point of fabricating visions and later accepting them. But, since these sensible visions are more rare and extraordinary and can readily lead to vanity or undue attachment, they are to be less desired and, when received, they demand much more precaution.

Nevertheless mystics have definite rules for distinguishing the divine from the natural and the diabolical.[31] The divine is recognized especially by its fruits: the effects and affections which are produced in the soul as a result of the various visions and locutions. Divine visions always show the stamp of their origin in the good effects of humility, meekness, modesty, docility, peace, charity, and the like, and the stimulus for good which they produce or tend to produce. However, the soul can abuse them by taking complacence in them, thus neglecting the fruit for the useless leafage which adorns it, too much occupied with the gifts and completely forgetful of the Giver, or by not using these things for the holy purpose for which He gave them. Yet these gifts remain fixed and indelible, ever inclining the soul to good.[32] Even after

31 See Benedict XIV, *De serv. Dei beatific.,* Ill, chaps. 51-53; and our book, *Grados de Oracion,* art. 4, pp. 95-104.

32 Agreda, *(The Mystical City of God,* I, II, 14) heard the following words from the Blessed Virgin: "The divine power which works in true revelations will inflame you with chaste love and reverence for the Almighty; will prompt and urge you to a knowledge of your own baseness, the rejection of earthly vanity, the desire to be despised by creatures, to suffer with joy, to love the cross and carry it with a strong and generous heart, to love those who persecute you, to fear and abhor even the slightest sin, to aspire to that which is most pure and lofty in virtue, to deny your own inclinations, and to unite yourself with the highest and only true Good. This will be the infallible proof that the Almighty visits you by means of revelations, teaching you to be more holy and perfect."

"Since I am Truth," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena *(.Life,* I, 9), "My visions communicate truth to the soul, enabling it to know itself and Me, bringing it to despise itself and honor Me. Thus do My visions humiliate the soul, making

many years, however poor of memory the person may be, he will recount faithfully, without altering a single item, all the visions and locutions he has received. The humble soul receives these things with fear, but later they leave the soul filled with peace, comfort, and a security accompanied by most perfect docility. The soul is unable to doubt them, though everyone should tell it the contrary. Yet with all humility and obedience the soul will work contrary to its visions or locutions if the director so demand, for it realizes that it is the will of God that His representatives should be obeyed and that God Himself will in time illumine them and even make them change their opinion at the proper time.[33]

When these phenomena are natural, the effects are indifferent, changeable, and temporary. After a time they are forgotten or confused and, while they are taking place, though their effects may appear good, it can readily be seen that they are not the work of the Lord because of the person's obstinacy, fickleness, sloth, coldness, or vanity, for such people always seek their own pleasure or convenience or try to satisfy their own self-love. Diabolical visions, together with obstinacy, coldness, and pride, always leave a certain unrest, a feeling of vexation, a disguised tendency to evil, although at the beginning these things were received with delight and with the apparent signs of good effects.[34]

it realize its own nothingness. The opposite effect happens with the visions of the evil one, for since he is the father of lies and the prince of pride, he can only give what he possesses."

[33] St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 26: "The safest course is that which I myself follow: if I did not, I should have no peace—not that it is right for women like ourselves to expect any peace, since we arc not learned, but if we do what I say we cannot run into danger and arc bound to reap great benefit, as the Lord has often told me. I mean that we must describe the whole of our spiritual experiences, and the favours granted us by the Lord, to a confessor who is a man of learning, and obey him. . . . Whenever the Lord gave me some command in prayer and the confessor told me to do something different, the Lord Himself would speak to me again and tell me to obey Him; and His Majesty would then change the confessor's mind so that he came back and ordered me to do the same thing." See also St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Sayings,* p. 186; *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 22.

The reason for this is that even though the soul, through the gifts and charisms, possesses a superior kind of certitude which prevents it from doubting, however much others may contradict it, yet it is not completely satisfied until it is assured in a human manner by means of the virtues of faith and obedience, etc. Therefore it must always proceed slowly and with advice. See also Agreda, *loc. cit.*

[34] St. Catherine of Bologna was for a long time deceived by the apparitions of the enemy who presented himself to her in the image of the Savior or the Blessed Virgin, encouraging her in her holy desires and suggesting superhuman virtues or exhorting

In themselves the divine visions are usually shorter and clearer. Passing like a lightning flash, they illumine and comfort and are so impressed on the soul that it has no room for doubts. Neither the imagination nor the devil himself could ever represent things of such beauty and nobility. Moreover, they are sudden and are without the least preparation. On the other hand, if sought with attachment, they do not come and, if the soul desire that they continue or that it be fixed in that state permanently, they disappear. False visions, on the other hand, are more or less provoked by the soul itself. They last for a long time and they can be prolonged and examined with curiosity. But they are incomparably less clear and noble and, in spite of their long duration, they leave the soul disturbed and doubtful, disquieted, fickle, proud, and in bad humor. In summary, the divine visions can readily be distinguished by the fact that they always leave the soul filled with light, prudence, meekness, goodness, patience, peace, joy, charity, purity, and the other fruits of the Holy Ghost.[35]

From this will be understood the immense difference between true and false illustrations. An experienced soul, especially one al-

her to perform impossible sacrifices, thus hoping to lead her to despair or to hinder her by sadness. In spite of all this, she succeeded in remaining faithful and docile and she was divinely freed from this deception and comforted.

"When the demon presents himself in the guise of light," said the Lord to St. Catherine of Siena (*Dialogue,* chap. 71; *Treatise on Prayer,* p. 7), "the soul at the beginning experiences a certain joy which later vanishes and is followed by darkness, tedium, and confusion. But when I, who am eternal Truth, visit the soul, it experiences at the beginning a holy fear, and later confidence and joy with a sweet prudence. Doubting, it does not doubt and believing itself unworthy of the favor received, it at once recognizes my great benignity and is humbled and gives thanks."

35 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 29: "I have strayed far from my intention, for I was trying to give the reasons why this kind of vision cannot be the work of the imagination. . . . One can indeed make such a picture with one's imagination, and spend time in regarding it, . . . But with regard to the vision which we are discussing there is no way of doing this: we have to look at it when the Lord is pleased to reveal it to us—to look as He wills and at whatever He wills. And there is no possibility of our subtracting from it or adding to it, or any way in which we can obtain it, whatever we may do, or look at it when we like or refrain from looking at it. If we try to look at any particular part of it, we at once lose Christ. . . . There is nothing that we can do about them; we cannot see more or less of them at will; and we can neither call them up nor banish them by our own efforts. The Lord's will is that we shall see quite clearly that they are produced, not by us but by His Majesty. . . . None the less, I could never regret having seen these heavenly visions and I would not exchange them for all the good things and delights of this world. I always considered them a great favour from the Lord, and I think they were the greatest of treasures."

ready in the grade of union or even of quietude, which has once received the divine visions will be able to see readily, as St. Teresa observes, how different are the other visions, and, if it is docile and humble, it will never be deceived.[36]

Yet the rationalists, lacking any experience, think themselves justified in reducing all these marvels of divine love to purely natural phenomena. In the name of Positivism they contend against the many experiences and observations of rhe great mystics who are all as certain, positive, and sure as they can be. Thus Ribot, after nobly recognizing in St. Teresa an "indisputable fidelity" and a "dexterity and delicacy of spirit" which enabled her to offer herself as "the most exact model of self-observation," nevertheless attempts to explain all her visions, contemplations, and ecstasies in a natural manner. But he does this with the accuracy with which a blind man could judge the various shades of colors. It will suffice to cite the following excerpt: "In the prayer of recollection (infused) I am unable to see more than a superior form (of simple meditation), distinguished by a subtle shade (!) and only perceptible to the mystic." [37] It is as if he were to say: "Red and green, or rather, black and white, or light and darkness, do not differ, but by an imperceptible shade" . . . for one who has no sight. No less is the difference between laborious meditation and infused contemplation.

To avoid lamentable mistakes, we should recall the three types of locutions which St. John of the Cross calls successive, formal, and substantial.[38] The first, which arc always imaginative, are produced in the form of a dialogue, more or less prolonged, on certain occasions in which the soul is much engrossed in the contemplation of some point. In this dialogue the soul seems to hear interiorly a

89Father Hoyos (*Vida,* pp. 94-96) notes the following signs, in addition to others, whereby one can determine whether a vision is divine or diabolical. The figure in a divine vision manifests itself like the living reality of a glorified body; the figure of a diabolical vision is like something painted. St. Teresa also notes this distinction. See *The Life,* chap. 29.

St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God,* VIII, 12: "The evil spirit is turbulent, rough, unquiet, and those who follow his infernal suggestions, believing them to be inspirations from heaven, can usually be recognized by the fact that they are restless, headstrong, fierce, aggressive, and rebellious. Under the pretext of zeal they upset everything; they censure, complain, murmur about everything, like people without restraint, resignation, or abnegation. They are carried along by self-love under the name of zeal for the honor of God."

[37] *Psycholog. attention,* p. 145.

[38] *Loe. cit.,* chaps. 28-31.

voice which resolves its doubts. By reason of the clarity and loftiness of the replies, the soul readily knows that they do not come from itself, for such doctrine had never occurred to it before, and therefore it must be God Himself who speaks. Nevertheless, even when the soul experiences a pious movement of the Holy Ghost who illumines and counsels it,[39] it is not necessarily He who is directing the soul. The soul's own reason is in control in this supernatural psychology. Hence it is the soul itself which, by means of the light received, composes the entire dialogue. It follows from this that, although this dialogue is ordained to the soul's own good, it can fall into serious errors, even in the very words which it attributes to God, because, after all, the words are the soul's own words.

It is certain that similar locutions occur in the natural phenomenon of the dual personality. But St. John of the Cross is the first to recognize this fact and for that reason he deprives such things of any importance and desires that at any cost they be considered as formally human, though they obey that pious motion of the Holy Ghost, simply because it is the soul which composes these locutions.[40] Consequently these locutions always pertain to the object which is being contemplated and it is easy for the soul to prolong this dialogue or to interrupt it by being distracted. Moreover, such locutions do not possess great clarity and certainty, and after a time they are forgotten or disfigured.

Former locutions are not provoked by the soul. They wound the soul like arrows, and the soul does nothing to contribute to them. They refer either to truths which the soul does not know at all and never could have known by its own industry, or to affairs entirely foreign to those on which the soul is meditating. Often they come upon the soul suddenly and at times when it is most distracted or even engaged in exterior works. Always they come with great efficacy and clarity. The soul hears them distinctly and does

39 St. John of the Cross, *loc. cit.,* chap. 29: "For this is one of the ways wherein the Holy Spirit teaches."

40 St. John of the Cross, *ibid.:* "I am appalled at what happens in these days—namely, when some soul with the very smallest experience of meditation, if it be conscious of certain locutions of this kind in some state of recollection, at once christens them all as coming from God, and assumes that this is the case, saying: 'God said to me . . 'God answered me . . whereas it is not so at all, but, as we have said, it is for the most part they who are saying it to themselves."

not lose a single syllable, nor can it prevent itself from hearing them, no matter how much it is distracted. The soul notes and feels distinctly that God is speaking to it, and it can have not the slightest doubt of this fact, for God lets the soul feel this with much evidence.[41] For that reason these things are never forgotten or confused. They are always true in themselves, though there may be some error in understanding or interpreting them.

When they pertain to future events they will always be fulfilled, though not always in the way expected. Therefore, no matter how much things may seem to work contrary to the locutions, the soul never loses its certainty that they will be fulfilled, though this be done by unexpected means or in a manner much nobler than the soul had imagined. These locutions, then, in themselves are always certain, but the saint takes counsel apart from them, not only to avoid errors of interpretation, but also because the more it prescinds from them, that is to say, the less attachment it has for them, so much the better is the efficacy of their effects felt.

Substantial locutions are similar to the formal but they are realized immediately and they have an absolute efficacy. They are like the creative words: "Let there be light," or, like the sacraments, they effect what they signify. If God were to say to the soul: "Love Me and forget creatures," immediately the soul would feel itself inflamed with a divine and efficacious love which translates itself into heroic deeds, and at the same time the soul would be filled with distaste for all earthly things. So the Lord said to St. Teresa: "I will have thee converse now, not with men, but with

41 St. Teresa, *Life*, chap. 25: "When God talks in this way to the soul, there is no such remedy: I have to listen, whether I like it or no, and my understanding has to devote itself so completely to what God wishes me to understand that whether I want to listen or not makes no difference. For, as He Who is all-powerful wills us to understand, we have to do what He wills; and He reveals Himself as our true Lord. . . . If it is something invented by the understanding, subtle as the invention may be, he realizes that it is the understanding which is making up the words and uttering them . . . and the words it is inventing are fantastic and indistinct and have not the clarity of true locutions. In such a case we have the power to divert our attention from them, just as we are able to stop speaking and become silent, whereas with true locutions no such diversion is possible. A further indication, which is surer than any other, is that these false locutions effect nothing, whereas, when the Lord speaks, the words are accompanied by effects, and although the words may be, not of devotion, but rather of reproof, they prepare the soul and make it ready and move it to affection, give it light and make it happy and tranquil."

angels."[42] She immediately became transformed and freed from a small attachment over which she had wept for many years without being able to root it out.

St. John of the Cross also recognizes that these locutions are of priceless value and that they never contain any deceit in them.[43] The effect which they produce is not changeable or transient, nor is it inconstant and uncertain, as is the effect of the commands given to those who are hypnotized. The simulated locutions of the hypnotized are sometimes not fulfilled or they are received with resistance, and in every case they must be repeated many times in order to achieve the correction of a vice. Even then, in spite of all the repetitions, the correction does not become firm and permanent. True locutions are always certain and efficacious and are never erased from one's memory. Nor are they fulfilled automatically, as in the case of the hypnotized, but the soul is fully aware of the light and energy which it receives with them for their fulfillment.[44]

[42] *Life,* chap. 24.

[43] *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 31: "They are of such moment and price that they are life and virtue and incomparable blessing to the soul; for one of these words works a greater blessing within the soul than all that the soul has itself done throughout its life. With respect to these words, the soul should do nothing. It should neither desire them, nor refrain from desiring them; it should neither reject them nor fear them. It should do nothing in the way of executing what these words express, for these substantial words are never pronounced by God in order that the soul may translate them into action, but that He may so translate them within the soul; herein they differ from formal and successive words. . . . It should not reject them, since the effect of these words remains substantially within it and is full of the blessing of God. . . . Nor should it fear any deception; for neither the understanding nor the devil can intervene herein, nor can they succeed in passively producing this substantial effect in the soul. . . . And thus these substantial words are of great service to the union of the soul with God; and the more interior and the more substantial they are, the greater is the profit that they bring. Happy is the soul to whom God speaks. Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (I Kings 3:10).

[44] *Life,* chap. 25: "In the state I was in at that time, I think it would have needed many hours to persuade me to be calm and no single person would have sufficed to do so. Yet here I was, calmed by nothing but these words, and given fortitude and courage and conviction and tranquillity and light, so that in a moment I found my soul transformed and I think I would have maintained against the whole world that this was the work of God. Oh, what a good God! Oh, what a good Lord! What a powerful Lord! He gives not only counsel but solace. His words are deeds. See how He strengthens our faith and our love increases!

"This is very true, and I would often recall how when a storm arose the Lord used to command the winds that blew over the sea to. be still, and I would say to myself: 'Who is this, that all my faculties thus obey Him—Who in a moment sheds light upon such thick darkness, softens a heart that seemed to be made of stone,

Thus will be seen how greatly these phenomena surpass natural phenomena. It will be even more clearly realized if we consider the purely intellectual visions and locutions or the rest of the spiritual sensations, impressions, and concepts in which no words are used nor symbols nor images nor forms nor figures nor any other medium of sensible representation, without which no kind of natural knowledge is ever effected.[45][46] They consist in the sudden infusion of a most simple mental idea, as fruitful and luminous as it is of short duration. It is an abbreviated *verbum mentis* in which the soul sometimes discovers a whole series of mysteries so far surpassing human reach that, even after it knows them, most of the time it can find no manner of words or symbols with which to express or represent them.[48] The loftiest language and the most exalted symbols, far from being satisfactory to give an approximate idea, seem more like blasphemies than approximations to the truth. Due to the impossibility of translating these things into human language, the mystics prefer to admire them in silence in order to benefit by them and not profane them. Truly, what is thus communicated to them, especially when the revelation comes through a certain spiritual sensation effected by the divine touch, are the secret words which it is not permitted men to speak.[47]

and sends water in the shape of gentle tears where for so long there had seemed to be aridity? Who gives these desires? Who gives this courage? What have I been thinking of? What am I afraid of? What is this? I desire to serve the Lord; I aim at nothing else than pleasing Him. I seek no contentment, no rest, no other blessing but to do His will.' I felt I was quite sure about this and so could affirm it."

45 Suarez, *De religione,* II, 14, no. 4: "All theologians assert that there is no contradiction implied in the elevation of a man's mind in this life to this type of contemplation in which the intelligible is contemplated without any aid from any of the senses." God is able to do this, as St. Thomas points out (Ila Ilae, q. 173, a.2; cf. q. 175, a.4): "by the direct impression of intelligible species on the mind, as in the case of those who receive infused scientific knowledge or wisdom ... as the apostles whose understanding our Lord opened that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

46 Blosius, *Institut, spirit.,* chap. 8: "Whatever words are used to explain these things, they are not apt. What these perfect souls experience when they truly attain to God and are intimately united with Him, cannot be expressed in words nor can it be comprehended by the intellect. Yet perfect men never rest in any of the gifts

47 St. Catherine of Siena, *Life,* II, Part VI: "It is impossible for me to say anything else but that I have seen the secrets of God. I would deem it a sin if by useless words I tried to say what I have seen. I would feel that I had blasphemed." Blessed Angela of Foligno, chap. 27: "So great is the difference between what my soul has contemplated and what I would be able to tell you of it, that I would feel like a liar in speaking of it."

The good which these words of life produce exceeds all evaluation and is truly ineffable. It can be known and appreciated only by the one who receives it.[48] Therefore, when the great contemplatives found themselves obliged to indicate in some way and as well as they could what they saw or experienced, they had to resort to circumlocution and comparisons. Even then they had to insist repeatedly that this does not approach even remotely what they desired to say and that it cannot be expressed positively, but only negatively, as in the sublime language of St. Dionysius (*Myst. Theol.,* V): It is not truth nor wisdom nor goodness nor beauty nor light nor darkness nor spirit nor substance nor anything that can be said or thought, for it transcends all our concepts and is infinitely more and greater than all of them.

In this ineffable manner God shows forth His incommunicable attributes, such as His aseity, eternity, immensity, omnipotence, which leave the soul full of amazement and admiration. In par-

48 Apoc. 2:17. *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, 26: "And although at times, whei. such knowledge is given to a soul, words are used, the soul is quite aware that it has expressed no part of what it has felt; for it knows that there is no fit name by which it is able to name it. . . . These lofty manifestations of knowledge can only come to the soul that attains to union with God, for they are themselves that union; and to receive them is equivalent to a certain contact with the Divinity which the soul experiences, and thus it is God Himself Who is perceived and tasted therein. And, although He cannot be experienced manifestly and clearly, as in glory, this touch of knowledge and delight is nevertheless so sublime and profound that it penetrates the substance of the soul, and the devil cannot meddle with it or produce any manifestation like to jt, for there is no such thing, neither is there aught that compares with it, neither can he infuse pleasure or delight that is like to it; for such kinds of knowledge savour of the Divine Essence and of eternal life, and the devil cannot counterfeit a thing so lofty.

"There are certain kinds of knowledge, and certain of these touches wrought by God in the substance of the soul, which enrich it after such wise that not only does one of them suffice to take from the soul once and for all the whole of the imperfections that it had itself been unable to throw off during its whole life, but it leaves the soul full of virtues and blessings from God.

"And these touches are so delectable to the soul, and of a delight so intimate, that if it received only one of them it would consider itself well rewarded for all the trials that it had suffered in this life, even had they been innumerable; and it is so greatly encouraged and given such energy to suffer many things for God's sake that it suffers above all in seeing that it suffers not more. . . . These favours are not granted to the soul which still cherishes attachments, inasmuch as they are granted through a very special love of God toward the soul which loves Him likewise with great detachment. It is to this that the Son of God referred, in S. John, when He said: . . . He that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him (John xiv. 21). Herein are included the kinds of knowledge and touches to which we are referring, which God manifests to the soul that truly loves Him."

ticular docs He thus manifest the adorable mystery of the Trinity which, at the same time that it casts them into the loftiest admiration, captivates and charms them and leaves them inflamed with the love of the three divine persons. This is the supreme illumination of the great darkness, and by its incomprehensible light it enlightens them and at the same time dazzles them. In this illumination, though souls think they can see nothing, actually they have a better penetration than if they were to see with a distinct vision which would give them positive concepts. It is in this state that souls are most filled with lights and in it they form a loftier and clearer idea of the divine mysteries.[49]

Although they are unable to express the sublime truths which are thus communicated to them, they learn in them in a moment much more and in a much better way than they would have been able to learn in many years in a class of theology. Then, when they attempt to write in a human manner concerning the great mysteries of faith, though they may never have studied these subjects, they speak with a facility and freedom, and at the same time with a precision, exactitude and assurance, which amaze learned theologians. The reason for this is that in one of these compendious ideas which they receive and in these ineffable concepts they learn the whole of a science at one stroke. With good reason Ribot declares,[50] that "only the great mystics in their lofty contemplations surpass the level of imagination and arrive at the domain of pure ideas, sometimes achieving a complete mono-ideism."[51] But he

49 Blessed Angela of Foligno *(Visions,* chap. 26), expresses it in this way: "What my soul sees cannot be conceived by any thought nor expressed in words. I see nothing and I see all. The more this infinite Good is seen in the darkness, the more certain it is and the more it exceeds all things else. Compared to Him, I see that everything else is darkness and there is nothing that can be compared to Him. When the soul sees the divine power, the divine wisdom, and the divine will, as has happened to me in a marvelous manner, that docs not seem much to me. What I see now is all, and all things else are merely parts."

Cf. La Figuera, *Simia espiritual,* dial. 4.

50 *Psychol, de L'attent.,* chap. 3; *Maladies de la volonté,* chap. 5.

61 "With great joy I fixed my vision on the will of God, His power, and His justice, and far surpassing all my hopes, I drank with ecstasy of the understanding of His mysteries. But the manifestation of these mysteries is denied to words. . . . Afterwards I was snatched to a greater height and there I saw nothing of all this. . . . I saw a Unity, eternal and unutterable, of which I can say only that it was entirely good. . . . I entered into the inexpressible. . . . All the states which I had known previous to this were inferior. This vision caused in me the death of my vices and the security of the virtues" (Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap.24).

should have recognized also that they cannot attain this by their own efforts, for the greatest and most enlightened human ingenuity has never been able to concentrate a vast science in one simple idea and in that idea to see distinctly the whole content and virtuality of that science.[52]

Intellectual visions in general are the simple mental intuition, entirely spiritual, of some truth or mystery which appears to be actually seen, not with the bodily eyes or imagination, but with the pure intellect, and without the intervention of any form or image, as in the various locutions, in which the truth seems to be heard spiritually. This is true even when the objects referred to are sensible or material. St. Teresa had for a long time such a vision of the sacred humanity of our Lord, whom she was most certain of having always at her right side, accompanying her at all times, animating and consoling her, although she did not perceive him by any sense.[63] These visions can last for days and years and they[63]

Blessed Henry Suso, *La union divina,* VII: "In this state the soul knows neither forms nor images nor multiplicity. It finds itself in a state of forgetfulness of self and all creatures, because it neither sees nor knows nor feels anything but God. Without any effort or application it is attracted to God alone and is fused in Him through His grace. It is raised above itself and finds itself absorbed and buried in the abyss of the Divinity where it tastes all the delights of beatitude. But, alas, all my words are mere figures and images which are far out of proportion to this sublime mysterious union which is beyond all comparison, just as the sun differs from the darkness of night."

62 Blosius, *Inst, spir.,* chap. 12: "When the soul is thus excellently united to God, there is nothing past or future to it. It possesses the eternal 'now' and in the unchangeable eternity which is God, it possesses all things and it knows the supreme order and distinction of images or forms. Thus the soul, transcending the intellect, flies to its idea and principle who is God and there is made light in the light. Then all natural and infused lights which have ever shone beneath this light are quenched or dimmed. . . . For when the uncreated light rises, the created light vanishes. The created light of the soul is changed into the light of eternity."

63 Interior Castle, sixth mansions, chap. 8: "She was conscious that He was walking at her right hand, but this consciousness arose, not from those senses which tell us that another person is near us, but in another and a subtler way which is indescribable. It is quite as unmistakable, however, and produces a feeling of equal certainty, or even greater. Other things of the kind might be attributable to fancy, but this thing is not, for it brings such great benefits and produces such effects upon the interior life as could not occur if it were the result of melancholy. The devil, again, could not do so much good: were it his work, the soul would not have such peace and such constant desires to please God and such scorn for everything that does not lead it to Him. . . . In short, the greatness and the precious quality of this favour are best seen in what the soul gains from it. It thanks the Lord, Who bestows it on one that has not deserved it, and would exchange it for no earthly treasure or joy."

are most beneficial and never give rise to any illusions.[54] In the series of natural phenomena there is nothing which even remotely resembles these occurrences.

It is well to remark that, although successive locutions are always imaginary, formal and substantial locutions may or may not be so and, if not, they are perceived by hearing or only in the intellect. Usually they are reduced to brief but energetic and lofty sentences, such as, "I am here; have no fear," by which the soul is comforted and freed from all its doubts; or, "Love Me," "Serve Me truly," "Take up thy cross and follow in My bloody footsteps," "Pray and suffer for the many who have gone astray," "Purify thy heart and let Me dwell therein, for you see now how many close their hearts to Me." Or, if the soul complains, He manifests Himself with His heavy cross and says, "What have I done that they should treat Me so?"

When the words are formal, they teach the soul and help it fulfill what is said, although the soul may feel a certain repugnance or difficulty.[55] But when the words are substantial, they are executed in such a way that the soul finds the thing already done. Some teach; others work; others direct and illumine; still others

84 Alvarez de Paz, *De grad, contempt.,* V, III, chap. 12: "In intellectual visions of corporeal objects a triple vision must be distinguished: one obscure, another very clear and intuitive, representing the object as it is in itself, and the third in between these two. . . . Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and some of the saints can be seen by the contemplating soul, though there is no image of the one appearing in the imagination. . . . In this way is given to the soul of a spiritual man the intellectual vision of Christ and the saints and by this means, without any previous imagination, the soul sees the Lord and the heavenly citizens so that he is inflamed with more ardent and more spiritual holy affections. . . . For this there is given to the soul a certain light which is or is eventually reduced to the light of prophecy by which the elevated mind so perfectly sees divine things that it seems to surpass the state of its mortality. Truly, sanctity of life is commensurate with sublimity of knowledge. For the soul then receives most potent aids for living holily and for conversing among men without disputes. It is remarkable what piercing eyes the soul has, so that it flees from the smallest and almost invisible imperfections. For the sun of justice is so close to it that it discloses even the smallest things. In this state good works proceed absolutely without number so that human judgment finds in them nothing which can be further desired. . . . In this vision, if it is purely intellectual, the illusions of the devil cannot intervene. . . . Only God can fix the intellectual memory on good. . . . Only He can incline the will to good without the concursus of the senses."

88 St. John of the Cross, *ibid.,* chap. 30: "This repugnance most commonly occurs when the soul is commanded to do things of a high order, or things of a kind that may exalt it; when things that make for lowliness and humility are commanded the soul, it responds with greater ease and readiness."

renew. So, with such sentences (which are not at all rare, but much more common than is currently thought), souls are animated and strengthened to follow the footprints of the Spouse; or they are reformed to such a degree that they are configured to Him.

Nor should it be thought that these words are contagious, simply because many persons in similar circumstances hear expressions that are almost identical. For they hear these words without knowing that they have been spoken to anyone else and therefore, when the words are exceedingly endearing, they cause the soul much confusion and uneasiness. Moreover, when God manifests Himself to souls and speaks to them in an entirely intellectual manner, He infuses in them that celestial light which illumines them at the same time that it dazzles and astonishes them. This communication suddenly instructs them in all things, and for them it is so new and strange and unexpected that there can be no question of contagion. On the other hand, since the communication is so superior to nature, there cannot be any deception or illusion.[56]

It is precisely these entirely spiritual locutions that are the more frequent and almost the only ones experienced by souls far advanced in contemplation. These most pure communications of supernatural light are never lacking in the ordinary development of the mystical life, though the imaginative or exterior locutions or visions, since they are not so necessary and are not free from dangers and deception, are frequently lacking.

What has been said thus far should be sufficient to give some idea of the most noteworthy phenomena of divine contemplation.

66 For that reason they are very desirable. In the preparatory prayer before Mass, which is recited by many priests daily, St. Ambrose begs for these things by saying: "Let Thy good spirit enter my heart, and there be heard without utterance; and speak all truth without the sound of words."

St. Augustine, *Meditations,* chap. 40: "Grant me, O Lord, the understanding to know Thee and the mental capacity to understand Thee. Give me ears to hear Thee and eyes to see Thee . . . and dispel the darkness of my heart by the most clear rays.of Thy light." "In Thy presence, O Lord," says Thomas a Kempis *(Imitation of Christ,* I, chap. 3), "let all creatures be silent, and do Thou alone speak to me."

Agreda, *Mystical City of God, loc. cit.:* "These intellectual communications are of remarkable use and profit to the soul, for they greatly illumine the understanding, inflame the will with incredible ardor, rectify, elevate, and spiritualize the creature. Even the earthly and weighty body seems to be made light and subtle in emulation of the soul. . . . Apart from knowledge of the Divinity, this type of knowledge is most noble and secure, because neither the demons nor the angels can infuse this supernatural light in the intellect."

But since we live in an age of crude naturalism, in which it is difficult even for Catholics to believe in these things or when it is considered something shameful to admit these communications of the soul with God, we deem it opportune to insist on the basis of the illumination of souls through a participation in the eternal light and truth which shine forth in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.[57]

APPENDIX

1. Visions and Locutions as Normal Phenomena

Ascent of Mount Carmel, II, 11:

Our Lord continues to prove the soul and to raise it ever higher, so that He first gives it things that are very unpretentious and exterior and in the order of sense, in conformity with the smallness of its capacity; to the end that, when it behaves as it should, and receives these first morsels with moderation for its strength and sustenance, He may grant it further and better food. If, then, the soul conquer the devil on the first step, it will pass to the second; and if upon the second likewise, it will pass to the third; and so onward, through all seven mansions, which are the seven steps of love, until the Spouse shall bring it to the cellar of wine of His perfect charity. . . .

Then, since the order whereby the soul acquires knowledge (chap. 17), is through forms and images of created things, and the natural way wherein it acquires this knowledge and wisdom is through the senses, it follows that, for God to raise up the soul to supreme knowledge, and to do so with sweetness, He must begin to work from the lowest and extreme end of the senses of the soul, in order that He may gradually lead it, according to its own nature, to the other extreme of His spiritual wisdom, which belongs not to sense. Wherefore He first leads it onward by instructing it through forms, images and ways of sense, according to its own method of understanding, now naturally, now supernaturally, and by means of argument, to this supreme spirit of God.

It is for this reason that God gives the soul visions and forms, images and the other kinds of sensible and spiritual intelligible knowledge; not that God would not give it spiritual wisdom immediately, and all at once, if the two extremes—which are human and Divine, sense and spirit—could in the ordinary way concur and unite in one single act, without the

[57] II Cor. 4:6.

preceding intervention of many other preparatory acts which concur among themselves in order and sweetness, and are a basis and a preparation one for another, like natural agents. . . . And thus God brings man to perfection according to the way of man's own nature, working from what is lowest and most exterior up to what is most interior and highest, hirst, then, He perfects his bodily senses, impelling him to make use of pood things which are natural, perfect and exterior, such as hearing armons and masses, looking on holy things, mortifying the palate at meals and chastening the sense of touch by penance and holy rigour. And, when these senses are to some extent prepared, He is wont to permet them still further, by bestowing on them certain supernatural favours and gifts, in order to confirm them the more completely in that which is good, offering them certain supernatural communications, such .is visions of saints and holy things, in corporeal shape, the sweetest perfumes, locutions, and exceeding great delights of touch, wherewith sense is greatly confirmed in virtue and is withdrawn from a desire for evil things. And besides this the interior bodily senses . . . He continues at the same time to perfect and habituate to that which is good, by means of considerations, meditations, and reflections of a sacred kind, in all of which He is instructing the spirit. And when these are prepared by this natural exercise, God is wont to enlighten and spiritualize them still more by means of certain supernatural visions which are those that we are here calling imaginary. . . . And after this manner God continues to lead the soul from one step to another till it reaches the most interior of all; not that it is always necessary for Him to observe this order, and to cause the soul to advance exactly in this way, from the first step to i he last; sometimes He allows the soul to attain one stage and not another, or leads it from the more interior to the less, or effects two stages of progress together. . . . Nevertheless His ordinary way agrees with what has been said.

It is in this way, then, that God instructs the soul and makes it more spiritual, communicating spirituality to it first of all through outward and palpable things, adapted to sense, on account of the soul's feebleness and incapacity, so that, by means of rhe outer husk of those things of sense which in themselves are good, the spirit may make particular acts and receive so many morsels of spiritual communications that it may form a habit in things spiritual, and may acquire actual and substantial spirituality, in complete abstraction from every sense. To this, as we have said, the soul cannot attain except very gradually. . . . And thus, in proportion as the spirit attains more nearly to converse with God, it be comes more completely detached and emptied of the ways of sense, which are those of imaginary meditation and reflection. Wherefore,

when the soul attains perfectly to spiritual converse with God, it must of necessity have been voided of all that relates to God and yet comes under the head of sense. . . . If the soul should desire to cling to them for ever, and not to throw them aside, it would never cease to be a child; it would speak ever of God as a child, and would know of God as a child, and would think of God as a child; for clinging to the outer husk of sense, which is the child, it would never attain to the substance of the spirit, which is the perfect man.

2. Visions and Locutions as Pledges of Love and Means of Sanctification

Agreda, *The Mystical City of God,* Part I, Bk. II, chap. 14:

When visions and revelations are ordained primarily to the public good, "it is not necessary that they be conjoined to sanctity." But when

they are not immediately directed to the common good, but to the particular benefit of the one who receives them . . . they have as their cause the special love with which God loves the soul and who communicates them to the soul in order to instruct it and to raise it to a higher grade of love and perfection. Through this type of revelations the spirit of wisdom transmits Himself through the various generations in order to raise up prophets and friends of God (Wisd. 7:27). And as the efficient cause is divine love particularized in certain souls, so the final cause and object is sanctity, purity, and love of those same souls and the benefits of revelations and visions is the means whereby this is effected.

Although the concession or denial of these things depends solely on the divine will, there are reasons of convenience why they should be communicated so frequently. . . . On the part of the ignorant creature the method most perfect and fitting for raising it to eternal things and spiritualizing it so that it can arrive at perfect union with the highest Good, is the supernatural light of the mysteries and secrets of the Almighty which is communicated through particular revelations. . . . Love is impatient to communicate its goods to its friend and beloved.

3. Efficacy of Divine Visions

St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 28:

The majesty and beauty of God are so deeply imprinted upon the soul that it is impossible to forget these—save when the Lord is pleased for the soul to suffer the great loneliness and aridity that I shall describe later;

for then it seems even to forget God Himself. The soul is now a new creature: it is continuously absorbed in God; it seems to me that a new and living love of God is beginning to work within it to a very high degree; for, though the former type of vision which, as I said, reveals God without presenting any image of Him, is of a higher kind, yet, if the memory of it is to last, despite our weakness, and if the thoughts are to be well occupied, it is a great thing that so Divine a Presence should be presented to the imagination and should remain within it. These two kinds of vision almost invariably occur simultaneously, and, as they come in this way, the eyes of the soul see the excellence and the beauty and the glory of the most holy Humanity. And in the other way which has been described it is revealed to us how He is God, and that He is powerful, and can do all things, and commands all things, and rules all things, and fills all things with His love.

This vision is to be very highly esteemed, and, in my view, there is no peril in it, as its effects show that the devil has no power over it. Three or four times, I think, he has attempted to present the Lord LIimself to me in this way, by making a false likeness of Him. He takes the form of flesh, but he cannot counterfeit the glory which the vision has when it comes from God. . . . It is so very different from a true vision that I think, even if a soul has experienced only the Prayer of Quiet, it will become aware of the difference from the effects which have been described in the chapter on locutions. The thing is very easy to recognize; and, unless a soul wants to be deceived, I do not think the devil will deceive it if it walks in humility and simplicity. Any one, of course, who has had a genuine vision from God will recognize the devil's work almost at once; he will begin by giving the soul consolations and favours, but it will thrust them from it.

St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 11:

"The visions that are of God penetrate the soul and move the will to love, and produce their effect, which the soul cannot resist even though it would, any more than the window can resist the sun's rays when they strike it." St John continues in Book III, chap. 13: "Though the effect of that apprehension be not so great afterwards, when it is recalled, as it was on the first occasion when it was communicated, yet, when it is recalled, love is renewed, and the mind is lifted up to God. . . . And thus this is a great favour for the soul on which God bestows it, for it is as though it had within itself a mine of blessings.

"When it comes to pass that any soul has such figures formally within itself, it will then do well to recall them to the effect of love to which I

have referred, for they will be no hindrance to the union of love in faith, since the soul will not desire to be absorbed in the figure, but only to profit by the love. . . . Those that are natural, or that come from the devil, produce no good effect upon the soul, however frequently they may be recalled, nor work its spiritual renewal, but the contemplation of them simply produces aridity. . . . But the formal images which are imprinted upon the soul almost invariably produce some effect in it, whensoever they are remembered."

Agreda, *loc. cit.:*

The effects of the abstractive or intellectual vision of the Divinity are remarkable, for in addition to the state which such a vision presupposes in the soul, . . . it inebriates the soul with an ineffable and indescribable sweetness and tenderness through which it inflames the soul with divine love and transforms it. It produces in the soul a forgetfulness and an alienation of everything earthly and of itself, for it lives, now not in itself, but in Christ and Christ lives in it (Gal. 2:20). In addition to this, there comes to the soul from this vision a light which, if the soul does not lose it through its own negligence or slothfulness or some other fault, will ever lead it to the heights of perfection, showing it the most certain paths to eternity.

4. Variety of Joys and Fruits

St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 37:

It must be understood that, in these favours which God grants the soul, there are greater and lesser degrees of glory. For so far do the glory and pleasure and happiness of some visions exceed those of others that I am amazed at the diversity in fruition which is possible, even in this life. There can be so much difference between the consolations and favours given by God in a vision or in a rapture that it seems impossible there can be anything more in this life to be desired, and so the soul does not desire, and would never ask for, any greater happiness. At the same time, now that the Lord has explained to me that there is a difference in Heaven between the fruition that can be experienced by one soul and by another, and shown me how great that difference is, I see clearly that here too, when the Lord is pleased so to give, there is no measure in His giving. I wish that the same were true of the service I render His majesty, and that I employed my whole life and strength and health in this.

It should also be observed that, after every favour in the shape of a vision or a revelation which the Lord granted me, my soul was left with

some great gain—after certain visions, with very many. After a vision of Christ there remained with me an impression of His exceeding great beauty, which I have preserved to this very day. . . . When once I had seen the great beauty of the Lord, I saw no one who by comparison with Him seemed acceptable to me or on whom my thoughts wished to dwell. For if I merely turn the eyes of my mind to the image of Him which I have within my soul, I find I have such freedom that from that time forward everything I see appears nauseating to me by comparison with the excellences and glories which I have seen in this Lord. Nor is there any knowledge or any kind of consolation to which I can attach the slightest esteem by comparison with that which it causes me to hear a single word coming from that Divine mouth. . . . And, unless for my sins the Lord allows this memory to fade, I consider it impossible for me to be so deeply absorbed in anything that I do not regain my freedom when I turn once more in thought, even for a moment, to this Lord. . . . Once I had seen this Lord, I was so continually in converse with Him that my love for Him and trust in Him began to increase greatly. I saw that, although God, He was also Man, and is not dismayed at the weakness of men, for He understands our miserable nature, liable as it is to frequent falls, because of man's first sin for which He had come to make reparation. Although He is my Lord, I can talk to Him as to a friend, because He is not, I believe, like those whom we call lords on earth, all of whose power rests upon an authority conferred on them by others. . . . O my Lord! O my King! If one could but picture Thy majesty! It is impossible to see that in Thyself Thou art a great Emperor, for to behold Thy majesty strikes terror. But my terror is greater, my Lord, when together with Thy majesty I behold Thy humility and the love that Thou bestowest on such a creature as I.

We can converse and speak with Thee about anything, just as we wish, when we have lost our initial fear and terror at seeing Thy majesty and acquired a deeper fear of offending Thee—but not a fear of punishment, my Lord, for that is of no account by comparison with loss of Thee! Here, then, are the benefits of this vision, setting aside other important ones which it leaves behind in the soul.

5. Communication of the Ineffable

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chaps. 21-27, *passim:*

God spoke to me in peace and in love. I gazed on Him and I saw Him. You ask me what I saw? It was God Flimself, and I can say no more. It was a plenitude, an interior light which fills, and for this light there arc

no words or comparisons. . . . It was that beauty which obliges anyone to close his lips; the same beauty on earth as it is in heaven; the supreme beauty which contains the sovereign good. . . . The divine operations which were verified in my soul were too ineffable for an angel or a saint to understand or explain them. . . . Even what I am saying seems to me a blasphemy. . . . When I return to myself from the divine secrets, bearing them within me, I can speak some few words with certitude. But if one deals with ineffable operations, with the illumination of glory, let no human word dare to approach it. What I am saying at this moment causes me the horror of a blasphemy. . . . This manifestation of God contains all truth, and in it I possess and comprehend all truth. All the truth that there is in heaven, on earth, or in hell, or hidden in any creature, I possess with such certitude and evidence that if the whole world should say the contrary to me, it would move me to pity rather than convince me. . . . This is where I see the being of Jehovah, I see also how greatly enlarged is my capacity to know better what is in the darkness. . . . I now see myself only in God, totally pure, totally sanctified, totally true, right, certain, heavenly in Him. I then think of no other created thing. Sometimes the Son of God says to me when I am in that state, "O, daughter of the divine Wisdom, temple of the Beloved, His temple and His delight; O daughter of peace, in thee doth the Trinity dwell, in thee is all truth. Thou dost possess Me and I, thee.

Ven. Marina de Escobar, *Vida y Obras,* I, III, chap, i:

My soul was inundated and lost in that immense ocean of the divine obscurity and the being of God, which is neither known nor comprehended. What this admirable secret is which passes between God and the soul and the grandeur of God which is known therein, neither words nor created intellect can declare. . . . My soul was completely encompassed by God, with a light and particular knowledge of His infinite grandeur and the plenitude of His omnipotence and His divine being with which the soul is inflamed and filled. My soul was likewise raised up to the divine being of God with a strong and powerful union and was carried by the Lord to the heavenly Jerusalem where for a brief space of time, so it seemed to me, there were mysteriously manifested and disclosed to it the treasures of His wisdom, grandeur, omnipotence, immensity, mercy, and goodness. In seeing such wonderful things, I was borne to the immense sea of God's being and there I was plunged into that deep and infinite ocean wherein my soul was submerged, swallowed, and lost, without knowing itself and without knowing or understanding in this immense sea of the divine being anything else but: "It is more than this;

there is more than this," yet without attaining it. Submerged in this divine obscurity and losing the vision of such grandeurs, being engulfed in them, the soul knows not how to say what it is, but can only say, "I saw the secrets of God, great, terrible, and admirable, which no understanding or language can ever attain or explain."

CHAPTER VIII

The Spirit of Revelation

IN order the better to understand supernatural experience, or rather, the mysteries of the life of grace, and in order to form a more adequate idea of contemplation and the mystical union, it is well to recall that together with the life of grace we receive in germ all the faculties necessary to exercise it, develop it, and carry it to its full completion. In this respect it is comparable to human life, with which we receive the bodily and mental faculties by which, little by little, this life is manifested and unfolded. In the beginning, human life is lived altogether unconsciously, but later, when the exterior senses are aroused and developed, the interior senses are also awakened and by their use consciousness is aroused.

The Supernatural Senses

An analogous phenomenon takes place in the supernatural life. This life is received in the regeneration of baptism and is strengthened by the power of the Holy Ghost who makes us active organs in the mystical body of the Savior, capable of giving testimony to Him in the name of His Church. But every testimony is based on a corresponding experience, and for this reason there is communicated to us a sense of the divine, the sense of faith or *sem tts Christi,* so that we can to some extent perceive the mysteries of life which we have received from our Savior and appreciate the gifts which have been given to us, rather than proceed like those who are insensible to the things of God.

"But we have the mind of Christ,[1] that we may know the things

[1] 1 Cor. 2:16.

that are given us from God.[2] He hath given us understanding that we may know the true God.[3][4]And who shall know Thy thought, except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above: and so the ways of them that are upon earth may be corrected? * Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me."[5]

This sense is aroused, developed, and diversified by right use, by the stirrings of the grace of the Holy Ghost, and by our free and faithful cooperation. So St. Luke says[6] that the Lord opened the apostles' understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. They already possessed that sense, but it was dormant. Therefore they had not yet perceived the mysteries that were hidden in the lessons which they had heard and therefore they did not perfectly understand them. But with this new awakening they began to see in all the deeds of the Savior the faithful fulfillment of the prophecies and even the foreshadowing of the life of the Church and they were amazed that they had previously been so blind.[7]

Since it is destined for the perception of supernatural things, the sense of Christ is completely spiritual and divine; yet in the manner in which it is perfected and diversified, it offers certain analogies with the various senses of the body, both internal and external.[8] It sometimes manifests itself as a kind of organic touch, passive and confused, which enables us to experience a certain vague impression —pleasing or painful as the case may be—of the supernatural. By means of this touch we are, without realizing it, assured of the mystical realities. We experience divine motions and inspirations and we recognize the solidarity of the organism of holy Church and the influence of the various members on each other, so that we "rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep."[9]

When this spiritual sense of touch is developed and perfected it becomes so subtle and sensitive that a person feels even the slightest evils of his neighbor. It is so delicate that one suffers insupporta-

[2] *Ibid., ii.*
[3] 1 John 5:20.
[4] Wisd. 9:17 f.
[5] *Ibid.,* 7:7.
[6] Luke 24:45.
[7] Luke 24:31!.; Acts 11:16.
[8] Cf. *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 23.
[8] Rom. 12:15.

ble sorrow because of the ruin of sinners and injuries to the Church. When later this same sense becomes active and conscious, it enables advanced souls to distinguish the soft and ineffable touches of the Spirit of love and the exhalations of life and grace which He makes circulate throughout the entire mystical body. Then they have full and absolute certainty of who it is that thus caresses and comforts them.[10]

So it is that such souls ardently desire the tender embraces and kisses of divine love, for they are now accustomed to be nursed at the breast.[11] They know by experience that these delights far surpass all earthly joys and consolations and are "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb."[12] The heavenly fragrance of these things is more attractive than all other aromas, and souls cannot help but exclaim: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth: for thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments."[13]

Although God hides Himself from them behind the wall of this mortal flesh, they know that He is watching them through the lattice-work: "Behold he standeth behind our wall, . . . looking through the lattices" (Cant. 2:9). Captivated by love, they sit in His shadow, under the true tree of life whose fruits are so tasty to the healthy palate.[14]

We have, then, a type of spiritual touch, taste, and smell ena-

10 Philip of the Holy Trinity, II, tract. 3, dist. 4, a.6: "Touch in the active sense implies the action of God intimately touching the soul. Touch in the passive sense means the immediate effect of this action in the soul and properly bespeaks a most delicate sense of that soul caused by this action." See also *De veritate,* q.28, a. 3.

11 The breasts are God's divinity and humanity. St. Magdalen of Pazzi writes (I, chap. 8): "By the breast of Thy divinity. Thou dost give to the soul a milk so sweet and smooth that when it has tasted those delights it acts like a child who cries at being weaned and, weeping bitterly, it is only that it may not die of hunger that it accepts the bread that is given it. So dost Thou treat, O Word, the soul which Thou dost lead to the breast of Thy humanity; that is, to the imitation of Thy sufferings. What sorrow the soul experiences at seeing itself taken away from the sweet breast of Thy divinity and deprived of the delights which Thou dost communicate to those who contemplate Thy grandeurs! It is necessary to have passed through this trial to understand it. When the soul proceeds from that inaccessible light it seems to it that it is entering into a dark forest where there is naught but darkness and where there is the continual fear of becoming the prey of wild beasts."

12 Ps. 18:11; 118:103.

13 Cant, i:i f.

14 Cant. 2:2. "The delicacies of love which the beloved Lord grants to souls," says Father Hoyos *(Vida,* p. 44), "are such that they are unbelievable to all except

bling us to experience and appreciate the marvels of divine love which the animal man is incapable of perceiving. We also have a means of recognizing and esteeming the precious pearls that are not meant for unclean beings. Not only are tbey perceived but, since the spiritual man judges of all things, he can feel and appreciate them in many ways and sometimes by a certain analogy with the distinct ways of perceiving natural things. Hence, lacking other words by which they can express their sentiments, experienced souls, as if by instinct, make use of those ordinary expressions of contact, taste, smell, etc.[15][16]

In the beginning this odor is as from afar off, emanating from some mysterious thing which attracts and captivates us without our knowing how or why. It engrosses us and makes us desire it, though as yet we cannot taste it. Thus did it draw St. Augustine [18] "like one attracted to the odors of something which he cannot yet taste." [17]

those who know them by experience. It is a spark of glory, a divine thing, heavenly foolishness, a holy extravagance. . . . It is a sweet annihilation, a destruction, a burning in the flames of love without end."

"I received from His mouth, milk and honey," says St. Inez. "That mouth," says St. Magdalen of Pazzi (III, chap. 16), "is the humanity of the Word; the honey is His charity; the milk, a certain taste of the sweetness of divinity, a sensation of divinity which the soul experiences according to its disposition. When God communicates to the soul the least morsel of this sweetness, it receives such strength and courage that through love of Him it faces blazing caldrons, sharp swords, and the most horrible martyrdoms. This sensation of divinity, however light it may be, is enough to make the soul lose in part the feeling of pain, as has been seen not only in St. Inez, but in the host of martyrs whose hearts abounded with joy in the midst of their torments. . . . This sensation, like milk, has its origin in the interior of divinity. It is like an emanation from the divine substance which the soul receives through the incarnate Word."

[15] Ven. Bartholomew of the Martyrs, *Comp, myst.,* chap. 13: "By means of a certain spiritual touch, taste, and smell, loving souls touch, taste, and smell God (which, however, is not given to speculative souls), and they are even said, in a certain way, to see God. . . . They are like an infant embracing its mother, suckling at the breast, who either does not see or hear many things or does not advert to what it sees and hears, being occupied solely in experimental delight and knowledge."

St. Albert the Great, *Compend. theol. verit.,* Book V, chap. 56: "By the spiritual senses the soul perceives the spiritual enchantments of the Spouse; it tastes His sweetness and perceives the good odor which He exhales; it hears . . . and touches Him." St. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* Part V, chap. 6: "The spiritual senses are mental perceptions concerning the truth to be contemplated." See also *idem, De donis S. S.,* I, chap. 3.

[16] *Conf.,* Bk. VII, chap. 17.

[17] St. Ambrose, *In Ps. 118,* serm. 6: "The just soul is the spouse of the Word. If it is inflamed with desires and prays incessantly, truly tending toward Him, it will

The soul that attains to the taste of the divine truth then recognizes its odor and knows from whom it proceeds. Therefore it exclaims: "Thy name is as oil poured out. . . . Draw me: we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments." [18] The Savior emits this sacred perfume through Himself and through all His sanctified members who can now in truth say with the Apostle: "For we are the good odor of Christ." [19] This aroma of divine fragrance exhaled by perfect Christians purifies and makes wholesome their surroundings, preserves the world from corruption, and, penetrating into sincere hearts, wins them for Christ. Such is the living preaching of good example.

The odor of divine things is followed by their taste, and after the taste comes a mysterious contact with divine reality itself.[20] Finally, there is an almost audible perception of divine harmonies whereby the justifications of God are made the subject of song in this exile,[21] and the eyes of the intellect are opened to see the Truth.

"Taste and see how sweet is the Lord." [22] "I have heard Thy hearing, and was afraid." [23] "By Thy commandments I have had understanding: therefore have I hated every way of iniquity." [24]

Once charity has been put in order with the inebriations of love, which leave the soul well purified, the soul is able to hear clearly

of a sudden notice that it hears His voice without seeing Him and that it experiences intimately the odor of His divinity. This frequently happens with those who have much faith. The soul's sense of smell is in an instant filled with a spiritual grace, and feeling a soft breeze, which indicates to the soul the presence of Him who is seeking for it, the soul exclaims, 'I have here Him whom I seek and desire.'"

Cassian, *Conf.* 4, chap. 5: "It frequently happens during the divine visits that the soul is permeated with perfumes of a sweetness unknown to human industry. The soul, wrapped in joy, swoons away and forgets the body entirely."

18 Cant. 1:2 f. St. Augustine, *Meditations,* chap. 35, 41, *passim:* "O Lord, let Thy most sweet odor descend upon my heart and let Thy most gentle love enter therein. Grant me the delicious taste of Thy sweetness and the indescribable gift of Thy fragrance which awaken and vivify in my soul the desires of heavenly things and draw forth from my heart streams of water running to life eternal. . . . I am thirsty, hungry, desirous of Thee; for Thee do I sigh and lament. I am like a tender child deprived of the presence of its loving father, weeping and lamenting unceasingly, but when the father again shows his face, the child embraces him with all the love of its heart."

19 II Cor. 2:15.

20 Cant. 1:1 f.; i:11; 2:3.

21 Ps. 118:54.

22 Ps. 33:9.

23 Hab. 3:2.

24 Ps. 118:104. Cf. Cormier, *Lettre à un étudiant en Ecr. S.,* p. 9.

the voice of the Beloved and to see how He comes, leaping over mountains and hills, to visit and comfort the soul and to speak to its heart with intimate familiarity.[25][26]

We see, then, that these diverse types of spiritual sensations gradually lead to conscious audition and sight and even to full understanding.[28] At the same time each of the perceptions give lise to corresponding supernatural affections and appetites: fear of God, rejection of evil, love, reverence, admiration, joy, quietude, adhesion to God, and so on.

"For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away: Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever. . . . It is good for me to adhere to my God." [27]

To these divine senses, which are represented by the five external senses, are added others that are analogous to the internal senses of imagination and memory and that reproduce, represent, or recall those divine impressions. There is also a kind of *vis aestimativa,* which spontaneously forebodes, evaluates, and perceives them before the intellect knows them, to make it love and work holily as if by a divine instinct.[28] These senses also arouse corresponding affections.

25 Cant. 2:6, 8, 10; Osee 2:14.

26 Alvarez de Paz, *op. cit.,* V, 3, 14: "The soul is given eyes by which it sees God; that is, a supernatural and divine light which suffices for such a marvelous vision. This is not the light of faith nor the light of wisdom only, for these do not suffice for such a vision. . . . But this light strengthens and perfects faith and wisdom. . . . So there is infused into the soul, a most perfect and beautiful knowledge far beyond our industry, similar to an image of God; not, indeed, that this image is made by the soul, but it is suddenly infused by the power and mercy of God. In a supernatural manner, the soul sees this image most clearly in its innermost recesses and it sees it more accurately than the bodily eye sees corporeal light. It sees, in a word, God, both one and three; how the Father invariably and from all eternity generates the Son; how the Father and Son together as one principle spirate the Holy Ghost; that these three are one nature and one substance. . . . It sees further how all creatures proceed from Them as from one creator and how They t^well in the soul and how true is that phrase: Let Us come to him and make in him Our dwelling place. The soul sees all this and much more in one intuitive vision and, in seeing, is inflamed with the fire of a most ardent love."

27 Ps. 72:26, 28.

28 This instinct, accompanied by the sense of the divine, often supplies for a better speculative understanding. So Bainvel observes (*Surnat.,* p. 321) that "a moral theologian will know that chastity cannot do or tolerate this or that, but a Christian virgin feels it to be so. It is enough for her to deliberate in order to work well." "Through the heart," writes Gardeil (*Gifts of the Holy Ghost,* p. 150), "God divinizes all our activity, including our mental activity. The Holy Ghost makes His

"I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me. I remembered God, and was delighted. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." [20]

Thus it can be seen that the spiritual senses are not imaginative. They transcend the organic imagination and even the rational intellect, and that is why they give rise to a type of imagination and memory which are also spiritual and lead to a supernatural and divine knowledge. It is not with these senses that corporeal or imaginative visions and locutions are perceived, for these latter are received into the internal or external corporeal senses. For in reality they are sensible phenomena, possessing figure, color, and form. But the visions and locutions of the spiritual senses, although they offer a certain analogy with the bodily senses, which authorizes the use of the same name, transcend every form and figure. Therefore, at the beginning these impressions disconcert souls because they are so new, so superior, and so delicate. They are a marvelous "sensation without sensation," a sensation of an unknown object, but filled with divine reality.

If mystics are accustomed to make use of these expressions, it is because they lack any other names. St. Augustine (*Confessions*, X, 6) refers to this very clearly when he exclaims: "What is it that I love, my God, when I love Thee? It is not a sensible beauty . . . nor the melodies of a varied song nor the sweet odor of flowers nor the taste of manna nor bodily caresses. No, it is none of these things that I love in my God. And yet, what I love in Him is a certain light, sound, odor, food, embrace, which can be experienced only in the interior. My soul sees a light shine which is not

gifts irradiate from the heart wherein He resides. . . . And if natural love has such certain instincts and such penetrating intuitions . . . what will occur with a heart which lies under the special influence of God and whose regulator, director, and guide is the Holy Ghost? O how infallible will be those impulses! How certain its instincts! How positive its intuitions! And how efficacious, in the midst of its sweetness is the light which the Holy Ghost thus irradiates!"

Blessed Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom*, chap, i: "From my earliest years my soul experienced a desire, a thirst for love, but I was ignorant of its cause. For a long time my heart yearned for a good which it was not given to see or attain. In this very instant I feel that I desire and love but I do not know what it is that I desire and love. But it must be something very great to draw my heart with such force and as long as I do not possess it, I cannot live tranquilly."

[28] Lam. 3:20; Ps. 76:4; Rom. 8:26.

contained in space; it hears a sound which is not diminished by time; it smells a perfume which is not carried by the air, it tastes a food which neither diminishes nor palls."

Scripture is filled with references to these divine sensations which spiritual writers have tried so diligently to describe by reducing them to a certain type of sense. If souls use them well, these senses, aided by the gifts of the Holy Ghost from which they are derived, lead to a clear understanding and perfect spiritual consciousness which are found when the gifts of wisdom and understanding reach a high degree of development. Therefore, although the normal exercise of these gifts is given to some souls by God very quickly and to others, perhaps more perfect souls, much later, it is certain that all the saints who reached the grade of the conforming union began to experience the divine touches distinctly and to taste His sweetness. Sometimes also they heard His interior voice and they saw Him to a certain extent. By all these means they were conscious of the mysteries of grace which were being worked in them.[30]

It is common doctrine that these various spiritual senses exist and that all just souls possess them to a greater or less degree.[31] As there are five senses in the body, says St. Bonaventure,[32] by which we perceive material things, so also the soul has its manner of seeing,

[30] St. Gertrude, *op. cit.,* VI: "God makes felt in the soul certain touches which are so delicate that the soul experiences in its interior, and even in the body, an extraordinary well-being." "I felt my God so united to my soul," says Sister Barbara *(Vida,* p. 342), "that it was as if I was one thing with God. I do not know how to explain it, but I felt something in my soul which only God could communicate to it." "In the mystical union," says Philip of the Holy Trinity *(Disc, prelim.,* a. 8), "God is perceived by an interior touch and an embrace. He is in a certain manner felt in the soul. . . . The soul perceives this clearly for then God certifies to the soul that He is really present." Honoratus of St. Mary *(Tradic.,* I, II, dist. 10) says that "the most illustrious masters of the spiritual life are convinced that the mystical union consists principally in the experience of the intimate senses of touch and smell."

[31] Cormier, *op. cit.:* "It will be asked whether such sentiments are the result of an arbitrary and poetic mysticism or whether, at the least, they constitute favors reserved only for privileged souls. That would be to hold a very weak view and to descend much thus to deny to the Holy Ghost the diffusion of His favors. It would be to reduce His action to a pious sentimentalism and to exclude irrevocably from His salutary influence almost the entire number of God's people. No, it is not so. Each disciple of the faith, walking along the more ordinary way, and with more reason still each minister of the sanctuary, can reach the states which we have just indicated and ought to aspire to them."

[32] *Itiner, aetern., 6,* dist. 2.

hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching by which it experiences in a spiritual way incorporeal and divine things.[33]

The existence of the spiritual senses of sight and hearing is undeniable. The angels and the blessed see God and see one another, though they have no bodies or corporeal vision. Therefore their vision is entirely spiritual. In like manner they speak and are understood, and this not with the sound of voices but by direct communication of thoughts.

So also, but in a much loftier manner, docs the Holy Ghost speak in the depth of one's heart; "I will speak to her heart." [34] "He that hath an ear," says the Apocalypse, "let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches." [35] The Savior I limself expressed this when He cried out: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." [30] Those who heard Him had bodily hearing, but there were many who were spiritually deaf.

Likewise there are few who hear the interior voice which teaches the divine mysteries. The sinner loses, dulls, or perverts the Christian sense. On hearing the voice of truth he does not understand it or understands it in a contrary sense.[37] Therefore we ought to dispose ourselves, purify our hearts, enter into ourselves, and try to approach God in order to hear His sweet voice which is directed to the saints and all interior souls.

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for He will speak peace unto His people and unto His saints: and unto them that are converted to the heart." [33] "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." [39] "I am Thy servant: give me understanding." [40] The

[88] "In view of the sentiment of so many illustrious Fathers, it would be temerarious," says Nouet (*Conduite,* VI, 14), "to doubt that which, together with these Fathers, all mystical theologians teach concerning the five spiritual senses. . . . All the masters agree in saying that the most perfect union with God which souls can attain in this life consists in that admirable experience of the interior senses. Perfection, teaches St. Thomas (*In Heb.* 5:14), consists precisely in using those senses well.

[84] Osee 2:14.
[88] Apoc. 3:22.
[88] Luke 8:8.
[8T] Luke 10; Matt. 13:11-17; Isa. 6:9.
[88] Ps. 84:9.
[89] I Kings 3:10.
[49] Ps. 118:125.

holy soul swoons away on hearing and understanding the sweet voice of its Beloved.[41]

In Job we have testimony of both spiritual hearing and sight: "With the hearing of the ear, I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee." [42] But to arrive at this joyful vision of the face of God,[43] we need much experience of divine things. We must spend a long time in contemplation, we must purify ourselves thoroughly, and we must die completely to the world. "Be still and see that I am God." [44] "Man shall not see Me and live." [45]

This vision or sight is preceded by the spiritual taste which causes the soul to be enraptured in divine delights which the world cannot know, for they are reserved for those who fear God.[46] These souls will be inebriated with the plenty of the Father's house and they will drink of the torrent of His pleasure, for in Him is the fountain of life.[47] Therefore does Wisdom invite her lovers, saying: "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved." [48]

By the sweet wine of heavenly wisdom, and not by the new wine of which the worldly ones mockingly accused them, the apostles were holily inebriated when, filled with the Holy Ghost, they spoke in divers tongues, inflamed hearts, and won thousands of souls for Jesus Christ.[49] In His wine cellar the Beloved sets in order charity which is sustained by the flowers of the virtues and the fruits of good works, heroic deeds, and above all, zeal for the salvation of souls.[80]

41 Cant. 5:6.
42 Job 42:5.
43 *Ibid.*, 33:26.
44 Ps. 45:11.
45 Exod. 33:20. In an ancient version of the Roman Missal are found the words: "Thou, O Spirit, purifier of all shameful deeds, purify the eye of the interior man so that the supreme Father can be seen by us."
46 Ps. 30:20.
47 Ps. 35:9 f.
48 Cant. 5:1.
49 See Acts 2. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.*, 17-19: "Surely they were inebriated, but with the fullness of the Holy Ghost. It is not to be wondered at, then, that their enthusiasm should have surpassed the bounds of human prudence. They were inebriated, but with the plenty of the house of God, for they drank of the torrents of His pleasure. They were inebriated, but with the fullness of grace which puts sin to death, vivifies the heart, and makes known things of which formerly they were ignorant."
50 Cant. 2:4 f.

As we have already seen, the Book of Canticles gives us many testimonies concerning the spiritual sense of smell. As to the sense of touch, St. Thomas says that it is the basis of all the other natural senses, and this is also true in the supernatural order. All the mystical states begin in some way with the sense of touch and by it they are completed and perfected.

The spouse of the Canticles aspires above all to the mystical kiss of the Spouse. On feeling the most gentle touch of His delicate hand which touches her in a very hidden manner, her heart and bowels tremble.[51] But she can be satisfied only when she finally rests in His divine arms. "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me." [52] When these mysterious touches are substantial, although at times they injure and wound, they are truly touches of eternal life and preludes to glory. So they caused St. John of the Cross to exclaim:

> "Oh, delectable wound! Oh, soft hand! Oh, delicate touch!
> That savours of eternal life. . . [58]

Sincere and fervent souls seek God by desiring to experience His loving presence and to live in contact with Him. "They should seek God, if happily they may feel after Him or find Him." [54] In the beginning, when they find him, they feel His presence without recognizing or distinguishing it very clearly. They perceive it by pure faith, in a human manner, rather than through the gift of wisdom, *supra modum humanum*. But when they truly begin to [62]

61 Cant. 1:1; 5:4.

62 Cant. 2:6. Denis the Carthusian, *De discret, spirit.,* a. 18: "When the soul has been purified and so burns with the fire of charity that it is now resplendent with the splendor of the virtues, God takes such pleasure in it that He treats it in a familiar fashion, as a sweet spouse, drawing it close to Him, caressing it, embracing it, and giving to it of His goods." "There are souls," says Blosius *(Inst, spir.,* app. 1, chap, i, no. 2), "whom God loads down with delights, who are united to Him in an evident embrace, and who receive from Him the most sweet kisses."

53 *The Living Flame,* stanza 2. Philip of the Holy Trinity, *(op. cit.,* Ill, tract. 1, dist. i, art. 5) admits a type of union through substantial contact with God: "By a certain substantial contact of God with the soul, His presence and union therein is felt. This union is perfected and also the spiritual faculties of the soul, as far as the state of the present life will permit. They adhere to God: the intellect by a knowledge that is almost continual and, as it were, evident; the will through love, not only of desire, but, to a certain extent, of satiety and fruition."

64 Acts 17:27.

withdraw into solitude, where the Holy Ghost calls them in order to speak to their hearts, they experience, amid certain sensible fervors, the sweet outpourings of His grace which captivates and enraptures the senses and purifies them so that they attach themselves to God and cultivate an aversion for worldly disturbances. Then later, during the great aridity that overtakes them in the midst of the obscurity which follows the privation of lights and sensible caresses, when they lament the loss of what they have been experiencing, they begin to feel with terror the presence of something which is supernatural and divine and which gently attracts them at the same time that it causes them great fright. They have a certain feeling which they cannot identify and cannot explain for it far surpasses everything of the sensible order. Yet it continually captivates them as if it were saying to them, "Come and see that I am thy God." [55]

55 Nouet *(Introd, à la vie d'oraison,* Bk. Ill, entr. 6) remarks that over and above the active presence of God which all should strive for, there is a passive presence, either habitual or transient, which is sometimes communicated to the soul when it least expects it. "Sometimes, after much suffering from aridity and tedium, the soul suddenly perceives that it is in the presence of its Spouse. It realizes this with full certainty, and this fact causes it a loving and respectful trembling. . . . This vision sometimes leaves the soul in a delightful admiration and sometimes it captivates the faculties as in a sweet sleep wherein it enjoys indescribable delights. . . . In this way does the soul see how desirable is this visit of the Spouse, though the visit may not last more than a quarter of an hour. But it is even more precious when it is stable and habitual. . . . This presence is exercised by a knowledge, a feeling, and a recognition that God is certainly in the soul and that the soul is engulfed in Him."

St. Teresa, *Life,* chap, io: "I used unexpectedly to experience a consciousness of the presence of God, of such a kind that I could not possibly doubt that He was within me or that I was wholly engulfed in Him."

Alvarez de Paz, *De inquis. pacis,* Bk. V, Part I, app. 2, chap. 9: "This presence of God within us, as the experts observe, is usually granted to perfect souls in a threefold manner. 1. So that the soul discovers God within itself and that it sits, as it were, at the side of His great majesty, but without attaining to any clear and distinct knowledge of any of His divine perfections; . . . The soul realizes that God is present within it. . . . It cannot comprehend Him, but it lives a divine life. . . . 2. The soul not only finds God within itself, but it knows some perfection or property of God by means of a lofty knowledge. This is not always the same perfection, for, since the perfections of God are multiple, this knowledge is multiple and varied. Now God appears as wisdom, now as goodness, now as power, now as justice, now as mercy, and so with all the other perfections. He appears now as the Father, again as the Son, again as the Holy Ghost. He who is in Himself indivisible, seems to give Himself in parts and to manifest Himself to the soul by means of His various perfections. . . . 3. God reveals Himself in His totality to the soul, not confusedly as in the first type, but He proposes all His perfections to be seen distinctly. In so wonderful a manner does He present Himself to the soul that under one aspect it seems that His entirety is clearly seen. The first mode is like a first

With the dawning of infused recollection they clearly note the loving presence of the divine Shepherd who awakens souls with His soft call and calls them by name and makes Himself known to them so that they may follow Him and receive eternal life from Him.[56] Then in the prayer of quiet and that of union they find true repose, resting sweetly in the arms of the Beloved and feeling Him rest in their hearts as in a flowery garden.[57] But as yet they cannot feel the Word of God actively and directly nor hear Him, see Him, and feel Him as He is in Himself. They perceive the Word only through His sacred humanity. And though they advert to the presence or absence of something mysterious and ineffable, they cannot yet perfectly understand what they feel or experience.[58] These spiritual and lofty sensations, in order to become sufficiently clear, demand a complete purgation of all earthly affections and total death to all that does not pertain to God or His divine service. Therefore souls are not usually experi-[66]

heaven into which many of the perfect are admitted. The second is a second heaven which few souls attain. The third mode is the third heaven to whose sublimity still fewer souls are granted admittance."

66 John 10:14, 27 f.

87 Cant. 6:1.

88 St. Bernard, *Serm. 73:* "I know that the spiritual man will not despise me, but the others will not understand me. Therefore, when the Word came to me, I know not whence He came, where He went, how He entered, or where He made His departure. Although I did not feel His coming or His departure, I am positive that He was present within me. I feel Him when He is present, and when He is absent I remember that He had been present."

Hugh of St. Victor, *De arrha animae, prope finem:* "What is that great sweetness which touches me when I think of God? It impresses itself on me with such vehemence and sweetness that I begin to be enraptured and to be raised up to I know not where. I suddenly find myself renewed and changed and in a state of ineffable well-being. My conscience exults, I forget my past trials, my heart is inflamed, my intellect illumined, and my desires satisfied. I feel myself transported to some unknown new place. I feel certain loving embraces within my interior. I do not know what this is, yet I do all I can to retain it and not lose it. I desire to embrace Him incessantly and I am filled with an ineffable joy, as if at last I had found the object of my desires. Could it by chance be my Beloved? . . . Yes, my soul, truly it is your Beloved who visits you, but He comes in a hidden and incomprehensible manner. He comes to touch you, but not to let Himself be seen by you. He comes to counsel you, but not to be comprehended. He conies to let you taste Him, but not to communicate Himself entirely. He comes to arouse your attention, but not to satiate all your desires. He comes to give you the first fruits of His love, but not to pour them on you in their fullness. Here you have a sure pledge of your future marriage. You are destined to see and possess Him for eternity, because He has given you to taste Him by that sweetness which you have experienced. So you can be consoled when He is absent, and during His visits you can revivify your courage."

cnced until they have attained the perfect conforming union and are beginning the transforming union. That is to say, not until they have passed through ecstasies and raptures and through the terrible night of the spirit wherein the soul mystically dies with its Savior to rise again with Him to a new life. Then it is that they perceive clearly but ineffably that they are living hidden in God.[59]

Up to that point souls experience God in a passive and confused manner, either exteriorly by a vague impression, as people in the dark by a type of touch note the presence of other persons,[60] or by a contact of immersion wherein they feel themselves submerged and engulfed in God's immensity and are bathed in the fountain of living water of His divine grace, as we are conscious of the air around us or the water in which we bathe. Or again, souls may experience these things interiorly, in their very hearts where He pours forth His ineffable delights which are perceived by an interior touch of absorption or penetration [61] in which the soul can say, "For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart." [62]

09 Ven. Sister Barbara, *Vida,* p. 298: "During prayer I was experiencing in my soul the desire to love my God with more vehemence and it seemed to me that I was completely absorbed in God or filled with God. I truly felt God within me. When God is felt in the soul and the soul realizes that He is there, words cannot describe what then takes place. . . . It is like a person outside himself. Ir seems thar it no longer lives for it is insensible to everything. It wants nothing and desires nothing and is unable to understand anything in this world. The only thing it feels is a strong desire to suffer much for God and to please Him in all things."

90 St. Teresa, *Interior Castle,* sixth mansions, chap. 8.

91 St. John Vianncy, *Life* by Monnin, Bk. V, chap. 4: "The interior life is a bath of love in which the soul is submerged and, as it were, absorbed. God holds the interior man like a mother holds the head of her child between her hands to cover it with kisses and caresses."

"After receiving the Lord," said Sister Mariana of St. Dominic *(Vida,* pp. 291-93), "I seemed to find myself entirely enclosed by God. . . . It seemed to me that besides having Him within my heart, I felt my heart united with His Majesty as in a most tight embrace. . . . At other times I have felt the presence of the Lord, and He seemed to hold out His arms to me, but I felt myself unworthy to fling myself into them . . . but His Majesty embraced my soul and held it tenderly in His arms and so intimately that I seemed to become entirely fused with Him and, without knowing how, I felt myself to be entirely in the Lord, who became the soul of my life and the life of my soul. . . . Being consumed and incorporated with the Lord, like a drop of water in the ocean, I found myself enriched with eternal goods. . . . I desired, if it could be granted me, to go to all the corners.of the world to seek those who would love God. So I begged His Majesty to give me souls, even at the cost of much labor, sorrow, and fatigue, and that I was willing to shed all my blood that they be not lost."

62 Ps. 72:26.

In these various contacts God is not felt in Himself but in the works which He produces, in the torrents of grace which He floods over the soul of His loved ones, to bathe and purify them, inundating them and inebriating them with heavenly delights, by which their hearts are carried away in transports of divine charity. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." [83] But when the ardor of that charity transforms them, it enables souls to feel God in Himself by means of those substantial touches which are truly tastes of eternal life.

The soul can actually sense the contact of other souls in the communion of saints, of spirits, and even of God Himself.[04] As one body touches another or is touched by another either gently or roughly, says Scaramelli,[05] so the soul touches other spiritual substances and is touched by them, feeling them with a sensation that is accommodated to the spirit. This brings extreme pleasure if the one that touches the soul is God. This touch, adds Scaramelli (no. 122), is "a real and true sensation, but purely spiritual, by which the soul senses God in the depth of its spirit and tastes Him with great delight." Feeling and tasting Him, the soul becomes more purified and more deified and it recognizes Him with greater clarity as it becomes more like unto Him.[00] On being transformed and made one with Him, the soul can sometimes come to the state where it sees Him as He is, to a certain degree, discovers His face, hears the voice of His Word, and perceives clearly the power of His Spirit who gives testimony to the saints that they are the true sons of God.[07] For-

83 Rom. 5:5.

64 See St. Teresa, *Life,* chaps. 25 and 27; *Redactions,* 8.

65 *Op. cit.,* tract. 3, no. 24.

66 Father Hoyos, *Vida,* p. 13: "Without any effort on the part of the soul, it is permitted to feel God who dwells in it by the union of a Spouse. He is so closely united to the soul that He is felt by the interior spiritual sense of touch just as a body is touched with the hands, but in its own manner."

67 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* Part IV, chap. 5: "One of the properties of the Word is communication. O admirable communication! O Word! ... I know that Thou dost communicate Thyself to us to change death to life, darkness to light, captivity to freedom, servants to masters, and slaves to sons. I know that Thou dost communicate Thyself to the soul which contemplates Thee and becomes Thy mysterious sanctuary. I know also the reason why Thou dost communicate Thyself: so that all things may become common to Thee and to the soul which now is one thing with Thee and to which Thou dost reveal Thy secrets . . . according to the words of the Gospel, 'All that I have learned from the Father I have communicated to you.' And in what way hast Thou communicated these things? Not only by the words which issued forth from Thy sacred mouth, and by means of the

merly it perceived Him as present, but it lamented with Job [68] that His divine face was hidden from it. Now it sees Him face to face, the sovereign Master who teaches all truth,[69] and it rejoices with an ineffable joy.[70]

To reach this state, souls must absolutely die to self, be purified from the last earthly traces, and strengthened by divine ardor and fire. They must likewise advance by degrees, lest they become fatigued, for as yet they are incapable of bearing the weight of such glory.[71] Hence those dense darknesses which confuse and annihilate at the same time that they strengthen, inflame, and illumine.

When, by means of those darknesses, souls gradually discover the divine attributes, and with indescribable pleasure perceive the eternal harmonies, they see also that they can never exhaust that immensity. The more they see in it, so much the more do they experience the infinite enchantments that yet remain to be seen and experienced. And this, in the midst of the soul's joy, causes them terrible anguish.[72]

Scriptures and Thy priests, but by a secret and interior voice heard only by him to whom Thou dost grant this grace."

68 Job 13:24.

69 John 14:16-26; 16:13; 17:24.

70 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visions,* chap. 29: "With the eyes of the spirit I saw. . . . What shall I say? . . . But to use some kind of language, I shall say that amid the transports of an ineffable joy I saw, with the eyes of my spirit, the eyes of my divine Spouse. . . . But to what avail are my miserable words? They repulse me, they shame me, and they seem like unbecoming play. . . . I saw that every creature was filled with God. . . . He said nothing to me of this in human language, but my soul understood everything and even greater things, and I felt the truth of things."

Alvarez de Paz, *De grad, contempt.,* V, 3, 14: "By experience, taste, and spiritual touch, the soul knows God and it knows the power of that word of God which the Holy Ghost spoke (John 14:17: 'But you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you'). . . . So great and evident and admirable are these things to the soul that, though it lacks the perfect vision of God, it cannot be ignorant of God's loving presence which is manifested by its effects."

71 Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 26: "After a man is perfectly freed from all interior and exterior attachment and learns how to lean only on his nothingness, he then discovers the conversion and entrance to that pure and simple good which is God. This conversion is in a certain manner an essential conversion, for the whole spirit, without any division, is recollected in God and on its part it never withdraws from God. Meanwhile God Himself always responds essentially. Here man is not transformed into God by way of images or in an intellectual manner, nor even as to taste and splendor, but He receives God as He is in Himself into himself and this infinitely surpasses every kind of taste and every other kind of light."

72 "What makes me suffer much," says Mother Mary Queen of the Apostles, "is that the more I feel God the more I discover the infinity which still remains to be

Just when souls are experiencing with marvelous clarity some of the divine perfections, though each day in a new manner, they enter into that great darkness which exceeds in clarity the most brilliant light. "But darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be light as the day: the darkness thereof, and the lights thereof are alike to Thee." [73] "After that," says Blessed Angela of Foligno (*Visions,* chap. 25), "I saw God in a darkness, and therefore in darkness, for He is a greater good than can be thought or imagined. And all that is thought or imagined does not touch that good." Therefore this night, though very sad, is the soul's most delightful illumination. "Night shall be my light in my pleasures." [74]

When souls thus illuminated find themselves, as it were, completely transparent, receiving without hindrance the most vivid emanations of the eternal light; when they see themselves divinized and enveloped in that divine immensity where, as in a most clear mirror, they see all things reflected, the result is that, although they have seen the Ineffable in reality, they could not yet see His face. They saw only, as we have said, His back, in the splendor of His glory which passed like a lightning flash.[75] They saw Him, finally, as their Creator and most powerful Lord, in the absolute unity of His nature, without as yet discovering the inner secret of the Trinity of persons, which is the mystery of mysteries, the marvel of divine marvels, and the enchantment before which all other enchantments are obscured.

In order to see Him, not now as Creator, but as Father and Spouse, and to know the intimate secrets of His house, to commune with Him in a familiar manner, seeing His most loving face —the Word of His wisdom with whom the soul must be espoused [76] —and to feel keenly the ineffable ardors of the charity of His Spirit of love which divinizes souls, in a word, to enter into familiar communication with each one of the three adorable persons, souls must be purified and transformed even more. For this they are

experienced and, though my soul is full, I feel empty because of the great longing I have to experience even more." See Marina de Escobar, *Obras,* trad. 1, Bk. III, chap. i.

73 Ps. 138:12.

74 Ps. 138:11.

75 Exod. 33:23.

76 See Henry Suso, *Eternal Wisdom,* chap. 1.

assailed by a new and more delicate light, pure and penetrating, which comes forth from the divine face and discloses imperfections even in the greatest saints and a thousand obscure motes in that which, in the inferior lights, seemed transparent. Those souls that were dissolved and annihilated amid affections of love, confusion, and gratefulness at seeing how through the divine mercy they were deified in spite of their former sins and thus attained a high degree of purification and sanctity, now see in their innermost parts innumerable subtle imperfections which formerly they had not noticed and they see that these imperfections prevent them from seeing the divine face. Then follows an insatiable longing for new purgations by which they may be purged of their imperfections and present themselves totally purified before the divine Majesty and endure His resplendent face. Being assailed by an inaccessible light, they are then totally purified in the mysterious night of the spirit wherein they are transformed in God and made one with Him.

They can now see the divine persons and, rapt in ecstasy, they are completely captivated by the eternal beauty of the Word of truth, who desires to espouse them forever with Himself.[77] And when they are well prepared, like the wise virgins, they enter, even while on earth, into the eternal nuptials of spiritual matrimony. Then it is that they participate without reserve in the divine secrets and, as much as is possible to wayfarers, they feel and see clearly and they touch and taste the divine reality itself which formerly was covered with the veil of faith. Then they distinctly hear the voice of the Beloved and they know Him as He knows the Father and they follow Him faithfully.[78] They experience His loving em-

77 Ven. Marina de Escobar, *Vida,* Bk. III, chap, *i:* "I was carried to a high mountain whence the whole world was revealed to me, and there came a heavenly light like a lightning flash by the light of which I saw the immensity of the divine being, and I was wrapt in wondrous admiration at such immense grandeur. . . . Then I was borne to a still higher mountain . . . and there came to me another light, much greater, . . . and I saw the divine being in itself and the divine perfections and the secret judgments of God and I was stupefied at such immensity. Uniting me to Himself, the Lord revealed to me the mystery of the Holy Trinity. But within myself I kept repeating: 'O Lord! How incomprehensible are Thy judgments! Who can know them?' And the Lord answered: 'The little ones and the humble of heart, who leave all things for Me and strive only to give pleasure to Me.' " "During these visions," she adds (chap. 3), "the soul is so changed that it seems to have a new being."

78 John 10:14, *5> *17> *8.

brace which gives eternal life and they receive His peaceful kiss for which they had longed, in order to return this kiss eternally amid great transports of love.[79] Then earth itself, on w'hich they walk without being stained by it, although it causes them a thousand afflictions by which they make satisfaction for the evils of the world, seems to them to have been changed into an anticipated heaven. From what they tell us of heaven we are able to ascertain what will be the glory which awaits us.[80]

78 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* Part II, chap. 6: "O beloved Spouse! Thou art our Father, our Spouse, our Lord, and our Brother. . . . But seeing that Thou art so beautiful, so lovable, so good, so sweet, and so gracious, I have dared to call Thee my Spouse and to consider Thee as such, to embrace Thee, to hold 1 hee, and to love Thee as my tender and chaste Spouse. Without Thee, O my beloved Spouse, I cannot have any peace. Without Thee I cannot live; without Thee I am nothing. Without Thee I can do nothing; nor do I wish to be nor to desire anything without Thee. Though Thou shouldst give me the nature of an angel, an archangel, a cherubim, or a seraphim, without Thee I would be nothing. Though Thou shouldst grant me all the pleasures and joys that can be enjoyed on earth, a strength greater than that of the strongest, a wisdom greater than that of the wisest, and graces and virtues beyond all creatures; all this, without Thee, would seem a hell to me. If Thou shouldst inflict on me hell and all its torments, it would seem a paradise if I could find Thee there."

Father Hoyos, *op. cit.,* p. 261: "My soul was alone with its Beloved and it dwelt in His heart. How I would like to give some faint suggestion of what I felt, saw, heard, touched, and tasted in that heaven informed by the Divinity, but man cannot express it. Even the memory of it confuses me and casts me into an ocean of sweetness mixed with confusion. . . . That sacred fire . . . consumed and destroyed all the coldness, all the weakness, all the mixtures with other things, until it left only my soul and nothing more. It was like the crucible which consumes all the dross and leaves only the gold. It seems to me that my soul was there stripped of the old man . . . in order to receive the impressions of His divine heart."

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visions,* chap. 36: "I saw and felt Christ embrace my soul. . . . From that moment I was filled with a sublime joy and light in which my soul saw the secret of our flesh in communion with God. That delight of the soul is ineffable, that joy is continuous, that illumination is an enlightenment beyond all other enlightenments. From that instant I possessed such certainty and security concerning the divine operations which were verified in me that I was astonished to think that I had ever experienced any doubt. If the whole world were to try to make that doubt recur, it would talk in vain."

80 Poulain, *op. cit.,* p. 83: "Many Christians have a very incomplete idea of glory. They picture to themselves the blessed as simple spectators of the beauty of God who is majestically seated on His throne. But God will be much more. He desires to be the perfumed air which we breathe, the drink which inebriates us, the life of our life and our vehement Lover. He will give us 'the kiss of His mouth' and will receive that of ours. He will not be content until He has sounded the depths of our souls and has become identified with the soul that abandons itself to Him. He desires an intimate and mutual penetration. Heaven is not only the sight of God; it is a fusion with Him in love and joy. If there were no fusion, the soul would experience an insatiable thirst."

Progressive Revelations

We have seen that in the grades prior to the ecstatic union souls rest in God and are submerged more and more deeply in the ocean of His charity, experiencing Him more vividly in the measure that they are purified and inflamed with new love. But during this time they have not yet reached the stage where they touch, see, and hear Him in Himself. However much they may desire to do so, there is a *noli me tangere* which prevents them from embracing Him and possessing Him at their good pleasure, thus giving them to understand that they are not yet sufficiently prepared for such lofty communications.[81] If they see, hear, or touch anything at all, it is a sensible representation, either imaginative or external, of the humanity of the Savior, although through these representations they feel in a passive manner and veiled, as it were, the spiritual contact of His divinity. To this are ordained sensible visions and locutions: to dispose the soul which is not yet sufficiently purified so that by means of these inferior lights which are accommodated to its condition, it will be rendered apt to feel directly the mysterious divine touches wherein it apprehends the "true truth" and finds light, health, liberty, and life.[82]

During ecstasy, when the senses swoon away because they can no longer withstand the spiritual ardors, certain clear concepts are intellectually communicated which permit souls detached from the earth, not only to find, but to some extent to possess and embrace the God for whom they long. They hold Him and they desire never to let Him go but to bring Him into their house where He will teach them all things.[83]

When souls thus begin clearly to experience the Beloved, to hold

81 Richard of St. Victor, *De grad. viol, charit.:* "The Lord makes His presence felt without showing His face; He pours forth His sweetness in us without manifesting His beauty; He diffuses His gentleness without letting us see His splendor. For this reason His sweet presence is felt, but one does not see His face, for as yet He is enveloped in clouds and obscurity. . . . What is experienced is sweet and full of tenderness, but what is seen is obscure because as yet He does not reveal Himself in the light. And though He appears in a fire, this fire heats rather than illumines. . . . This causes the soul to say: 'Reveal to me the splendor of Thy countenance.' "

82 See John 6:45 f., 64; 8:31 f.; 14:6.

83 Cant. 3:4; 8:2.

Him in their arms, and to receive His ineffable kiss, they also begin to see and hear Him.[84] They see the sparks of His light in which some of His divine attributes are manifested, and spiritually or intellectually they hear the words of the Word of truth and life who, without the noise of voices or the appearance of forms, gives them an understanding of the divine secrets.

This first spiritual manifestation of the divine beauty, whose reality infinitely exceeds whatever we may imagine, leaves them enraptured. It is the cause of those violent and impetuous seizures which take them by surprise and which they are unable to avoid. During these raptures they receive remarkable information concerning the things of God and they know the *raison d'etre* of the spiritual and material world. Intellectually they see not only incorporeal objects but also bodily ones and with greater clarity and certainty than if they saw such things with their bodily eyes for they penetrate to their very roots and comprehend them. All this takes place without the intervention of any sensitive or imaginative form.[85]

Thus they can see spiritually the humanity of the Lord joined to His divinity. But sometimes this spiritual vision of the divinity is perfected by an imaginative vision of the holy humanity which is vividly presented to them in some mystery of His holy life, with a beauty and majesty incomparably superior to anything they could ever imagine. In this way He is made more accessible to them, adapting Himself to their present condition.[86] In the same way intellectual illustrations and spiritual concepts are sometimes further defined with greater precision and made easier to express when they are complemented by imaginative locutions, which exercise such a role in the lives of many of the saints, and especially in their

84 Cant., 2:10; 5:2-6.

85 Ven. Marina de Escobar, *Obras,* trat. II, Bk. II, chap. 34: "When in a profound ecstasy God suddenly unites the soul to His essence and fills it with His light, He manifests to it in an instant the loftiest mysteries, together with His secrets. The soul sees an immense unity and an infinite majesty. ... It understands how all creatures depend on the providence of God and are conserved by Him; it understands how He is the happiness of the angels and the elect; it knows that He is the only principle and end of all things and that outside of Him they have no beginning or end; it knows that He is the first cause and has absolute dominion over all things."

86 See St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 28.

writings. As a result, these things are more within the reach of all and are more widely appreciated.

In regard to the communicable divine attributes of which we are able to form some idea by analogy, these souls see, by means of a brilliant light, how greatly these attributes exceed our poor comprehension and weak evaluations. Such beauty leaves them captivated and wounded with an indescribable pain because they are not yet able to endure all Edis splendors and also because their sensitivity is greatly increased. But although they see that these tilings are incomprehensible, they are nevertheless able to some extent to declare these marvels by means of analogies, especially when God Himself suggests certain symbols which are more suitable for representing them. In this way these souls are able to express themselves with inspired language and to admire the infinite goodness, justice, power, and wisdom of God.

But when God manifests His inner splendor to souls and discloses to them some of His incommunicable attributes, then the infinitely excessive light, which is so superior and so different from anything they could imagine, leaves them blinded and dumb, enclosed in the unsoundable abyss of the great darkness. This is the mysterious obscurity which surpasses all light, wherein it seems that souls see nothing because they see so much. What they experience and perceive most vividly is the absolute incomprehensibility which overwhelms and confounds them and leaves them blinded.[87] Thus, although they receive more lights, their vision seems more obscure in the midst of the eternal splendors of the divine darkness.

But it is necessary to pass through these things at any cost in order to arrive at the full vision and possession of Him who "dwells in light inaccessible."[88] Ide is enveloped in clouds and obscurities

st "If anyone, seeing God," says Sr. Dionysius *(Epist. ad Cajnnf),* "understands what he sees, then he does not really see God, but something that resembles God; that is, some one of His divine effects."

St. Gregory, *Moral.,* Bk. V, chap. 26: "Anything that the mind is able to perceive perfectly is not God. ... It is therefore true to say that we know about God when we feel plainly that we cannot know anything about Him." "For whatever the human mind is able to think about God," he says in another place *(In 1 Reg.,* chap. 20), "is not God."

88 1 Tim. 6: ıó.

and hidden in the darkness which He places beneath His feet.[89] For truly He is a hidden God.[90]

Yet, God is light, and in Him there is no darkness.[91] He is the true light which enlightens every man,[92] but His excessive light blinds the understanding and makes it appear to be surrounded by a heavy darkness.[93] This darkness reaches its culmination when He discloses His most excellent attributes which, because of their unique qualities, can in no way be participated by creatures. Since there is nothing in them that can be represented by analogy or give the remotest idea of what they are in themselves, when they appear before the soul such as they are, they cause it to be dazzled and astonished to the highest degree and to be plunged into the very center of the great darkness. In vain does the soul try to speak of this sublime event, for, like Blessed Angela of Foligno, in so doing it is attempting rhe impossible.

Among these attributes are God's eternity, immensity, aseity (His necessary self-existence), immutability, and the real identity of all His perfections which, however, we see as distinct. Surpassing all these marvels is the mystery of mysteries: the trinity of persons with their mutual relationships within the absolute unity of the divine nature. When these prodigious mysteries are disclosed, then follows a great divine enlightenment in the midst of that obscurity which surpasses all knowledge and which, though it appears to be ignorance, gives a glimpse of the complete Truth. But on seeing that sovereign reality which is so distinctly and infinitely superior to anything that could be said or thought of it, the soul cannot but be mute and blind, as St. Teresa says. Yet in its blindness, the soul sees all and in that dumbness which causes the soul to

89 "And darkness was under His feet . . . and He made darkness His covert" (Ps. 17:10, 12). "Clouds and darkness are round about Him" (Ps. 96:2).

90 Isa. 45:15; III Kings 8:12; II Par. 6:1.

91 1 John 1:5.

92 John 1:9.

93 Alvarez de Paz, *De grad, comempl.,* V, Part III, chap. 13: "The soul's vision is called a divine darkness for, if one compares it with what is to follow, it is an obscure knowledge of God. Yet it is so perfectly illumined and so admirable that the soul is satiated with abundant illustrations and affections. . . . It is an intellectual vision of God in the midst of darkness, an understanding by which, surpassing all creatures and abandoning all likenesses of even supernatural mysteries, we are borne to God who is incomprehensible and unknowable to us and unintelligible to us, and we are absorbed in Him as in the ocean of His infinite essence, of which we are ignorant."

adore in silence and wherein even the most sublime words are considered as blasphemies, is found the most eloquent preaching of the ineffable.[94]

This knowledge, although it is called and truly appears to be negative, because it can be expressed only by negation of ordinary ideas, is the highest type of positive knowledge which is attainable in this life. It implies the most solemn affirmation: the absolute reality which the soul contemplates and tries to express, which defies all limitations and, transcending all created realities, is, in its unique eminence, comparable to nothing else. No comparison of it can be made in order to describe it. Only the Word of eternal Wisdom expresses it adequately. Its negation lies in the form of the human expressions, but not in the spiritual intuition, though this intuition itself, because of its incomprehensibility, seems to be dark.[95]

For that reason the soul remains prostrated and annihilated at the vision of such light, grandeur, and beauty which on the one hand captivates it, ravishes it, and fills it with immeasurable joy, and on the other hand, since the soul is unable to bear such a weight of glory, causes intense suffering and a sort of hell. As a result, without realizing how these two extremes are blended, the soul suffers and rejoices at the same time, without the one activity impeding the other. This took place for many years in St. Catherine of Genoa, and I saw the same phenomena take place in the angelic Mother Mary, Queen of the Apostles, who anxiously asked me during her last hours concerning such a strange manner of living, though I myself had no doubts that it was from God. Although this pain is

94 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 27: "If I try to speak of eternal life, it seems to me that instead of praising it, I blaspheme. . . . But God will enlarge my capacity to perceive it."

95 Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 22: "In this obscurity the divine light is found more clearly, and the deeper the obscurity the more true is the resultant knowledge. If now God docs not wish to manifest Himself, when His divine Majesty does wish to do so who is there who can deny it? In this darkness or cloud," he adds (chap. 26), "God essentially enlightens the soul. In an ineffable manner He surpasses all the names which one could give Him, subsisting purely and simply in His own substance, for the essence of God in itself does not admit of any name. Those who have given it a name, have taken words which refer to creatures."

"O most brilliant obscurity!" exclaims St. Dionysius *(Mist. Theol.,* 1). "Marvelous obscurity which irradiates most splendid flashes of light and which, not being seen or perceived, inundates blinded souls with the beauty of its splendors and reveals the divine mysteries to them."

so stupendous and almost intolerable, these souls do not wish it to cease but rather that it be increased because they see that through it they are being configured to Christ and deified.[96]

In the measure that the purification and transformation of souls are increased, so also is their capacity. Since their obstacles are fewer, they see the divine reality more clearly and with less pain and more joy. Better and better they recognize His ineffable attributes and perfections and in their silence they already enjoy eternal life. As the eyes of the soul are more purified and strengthened, the great obscurity is more frequently broken by sudden flashes of light, which seem to be the light of glory, as if these souls were permitted for an instant to see God as He is in Himself.[97] These flashes of light increase in clarity and duration, and the soul becomes inundated in an ocean of light and finds itself totally luminous, transparent, and deified, filled as it is with the very clarity, knowledge, power, fortitude, and charity of God.[98]

Thus the soul is disposed, as we have said, to see the divine face and to discover in the abyss of the unity of the divine nature the inaccessible mystery of the trinity of persons; to see the special relations which bind the soul to each person and also the mysterious work which each one realizes in the soul and in other souls in order to adorn them with the beauty of God and to deify them.[99] It sees the ineffable tenderness of the Father who adopts the soul as His daughter; the enchantments of the Word who proceeds

98 These were the desires also of Mother Mary, spoken of previously. "May my sufferings always increase and always grow greater! . . . I cannot live without them. . . . But may God give me the power to sustain them, for they are irresistible!"

97 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visions,* chap. 27: "God augments the capacity of the soul for perceiving and possessing Him. . . . When He discloses Himself to the soul, He enlarges it and pours forth in it unknown joys and riches."

98 John 17:17-26. See also *Living Flame of Love,* canticle 3, verses 4, 5.

99 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 47: "I saw the glorious Trinity and I saw how It dwelt in the souls of my spiritual children and transformed them into Itself in various manners, according to the respective purification of each one. . . . I saw that this purification had three grades: 1. an austerity and fortitude by which sin is easily avoided; 2. a grace which makes delightful the practice of virtue; 3. the soul reaches the fullness of its perfection and is transformed in Jesus crucified. Together with these graces they received a singular beauty, and each one greater than the last. . . . That of the third grade is greater than anything that can be imagined and it reduces me to silence. . . . I shall say only that in that transformation of my spiritual sons in God I saw them disappear, in a certain way, being submerged and transubstantiated in Him in such a way that I now saw in them only Jesus, now suffering, now glorified."

from the Father and takes the soul as His spouse; the charity of the Spirit of adoption who, proceeding from the Father and the Son, vivifies, sanctifies, and deifies the soul.[100] Finally, as Tauler says, the soul sees how the whole admirable mystery of the Trinity re-echoes and is reproduced in the soul itself.[101] This is the wonder of all wonders and the soul sees and feels all this with an evidence far superior to that which it could have concerning perishable things through the bodily senses. This is true to such an extent that even if it had never heard a word spoken about that mystery, it would nevertheless understand it better than the most excellent speculative theologian.[102] Although all the wise men of the world together should contradict the soul, it would stoutly defend itself against them, feeling confident of triumphing. Far from weakening before their arguments, it would feel the same pity for them as for the ravings of a madman, if, indeed, they did not cause the soul to break out into laughter.[103]

One can see from this the folly of the rationalists who, without

100 See St. Augustine, *Meditations,* chap. 9.

101 St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, *op. cit.,* Part II, chap. 2: "By an entirely gratuitous goodness, God gives us a clear vision of the adorable and sublime communications which take place among the three divine persons; communications which the soul can taste by contemplating them in a placid silence. . . . But these things cannot be expressed, and it is better to be silent and to admire them without wishing to speak. When the soul has enjoyed this communication for some time, His love engenders the divine Word in the soul in a certain way and thousands of times over. What an ineffable favor!"

Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 28: " 'When, rid of all its impediments and forgetful of self and all perishable creatures, thou dost rise up with all thy power, and when, surpassing all time, thou dost go beyond thyself and art absorbed in Me,' said the Lord to one of His servants, 'thou dost make Me forget My excellence to such a degree that I am constrained to descend to thy soul and there to be engendered of My heavenly Father in an ineffable manner by which action He also adopted thee as a son. Within thee I dispose, command, and govern heaven and earth.' "

102 "Even if the soul had never known from the Church how many persons there are in the Trinity and how the one proceeds from the other," observes Poulain (*op. cit.,* p. 239), "it would then come to know it in an experimental way by seeing it." Sometimes, however, only one of the divine persons is manifested, and the others are not seen. This happened in the case of Ven. Marina de Escobar, who testifies that sometimes she saw only the Word (*Obras,* II, Bk. II, chap. 31) and that at other times she saw only the Holy Ghost (*op. cit.,* I, Bk. II, chaps. 21, 23, 24; II, Bk. I, chap. 48; Bk. II, chap. 30). A similar occurrence happened to Blessed Angela of Foligno. We know there are very many souls that felt in a special manner the interior presence of the Holy Ghost as sanctifier, consoler, and master, though they had never heard a word about these mysteries of life in God.

103 See Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visions,* chap. 27; Blosius, *Spec, spir.,* chap, it; *Inst.,* chap. 12; St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 27; *Interior Castle,* seventh mansions, chap. 1.

the slightest notion of the supernatural, put themselves to great pains to philosophize on the psychology of the mystics, in the hope of correcting the most experienced masters. With much aplomb they state that all those lofty contemplations, concerning which the masters themselves do not dare to form any ideas, are pure illusions and lack all objective reality. It is to this conclusion that all their speculations tend. Hence, though they claim to set forth the facts impartially, even without realizing it they totally distort the facts as Blondel accused them of doing, by presenting them under the presupposition that they all admit of a natural explanation.

Poor blind men! They take as an illusion that light which illumines all who have eyes to see. One of them descended to the consummate puerility of affirming that, when the saints said that they saw the mystery of the Trinity, it was because the Trinity was vividly represented in their imagination as a block of marble on which three persons had been sculptured. Yet these men dare to dispute with the best theologians and to speak on the most intricate questions pertinent to the mystery of the Trinity with that sort of exactness and propriety!

Truly the animal man cannot perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God. The learned men who manifested such competency and sincerity in their scientific investigations are utterly worthless here. They attempt to examine these precious pearls as a brute would gaze upon and sniff the pages of a book of psychology, metaphysics, or algebra. Therefore was it written: "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine." [104] They would wish to evaluate the spiritual marvels of divine love in a carnal manner and by so doing they would trample on them and profane them. Such things are not for them unless first they purify their hearts well.[105]

104 Matt. 7:6.

105 Many doctors and rationalistic psychologists incapable of appreciating the delicacies of divine love have taken the expressions analagous to human love which the mystics were forced to use and have dared to interpret them as a perversion of human love and pertaining to man's basest instincts. Their hearts would not let them see anything else. But even William James (*Religious Experience,* chap. 1) has branded them with the stigma of "medical materialism," saying that "few evaluations could be more void of meaning than that," for "human language must avail itself of images taken from our lowly life." "Divine love," says G. Dumas ("Com-

Yet, the interest which mysticism arouses today among so many unbelievers who cannot deny the reality of these marvelous events and therefore try to explain them by natural means or in any manner they can, should put to shame and confusion many Catholics. Among these are some few religious and ecclesiastics who should know these matters profoundly in order to direct souls with accuracy and to orientate their own souls; instead, they look on mysticism with the most shameful, indeed criminal, indifference. As if it were of no importance to them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God within us! [108]

The incredulous, with their obdurate hearts, however much they claim to be impartial, can neither see nor understand the mystery which is hidden in these phenomena.[106][107] They see the basic uniformity with which, in the midst of an almost unbelievable variety of expressions, the mystics speak, though many of them have never read or heard anything of what has happened to other souls. Their sincerity, penetration, delicacy of sentiment, and perfect equilibrium cannot be denied. Yet the unbelievers reject all this unanimous and imposing testimony. What is lacking that would make these facts credible? Nothing. *Credibilia facta sunt nimis.* What is lacking is the disposition to receive these reports and the sense to appreciate them.

Yet these phenomena remain, and without the one true explanation—intimate communication with God—the facts will always remain enigmas. How can one explain the undeniable fact that so many simple and unlettered souls, in a moment of their loftiest contemplation, acquire a prodigious knowledge with which they

ment aiment les myst.," *Rev. Deux-Mondes,* September 15, 1906), "is infinitely richer than all human sentiments. . . . To form some idea of its power, one must not forget that they refer to eternal realities which, in the mind of the mystics, cannot be compared with anything earthly."

106 St. Matilda, *Lux. divinit.,* 5, 11: "O Lord, I must complain at seeing such blindness in these persons. They are ecclesiastics, yet they fear the grace of interior devotion. Among this number I also see religious and, among them, many who are considered prudent and wise. Although divine mercy pours forth rays of light sufficient to burn and melt the soul, human evaluation, being intransigent, wishes to trade the heavenly for the earthly. It is necessary that I make myself useful to the world by exterior works. Ah, Lord, to care for the body and to live in such a way that one's example teaches the love and imitation of the mundane spirit, this is what those 'prudent' ones call practical wisdom."

107 Matt. 13:9-16; Mark 4:9-12.

later astound the greatest theologians? Such souls have been numerous: Hildegard, Angela of Foligno, Catherine of Siena, Catherine of Genoa, Catherine of Bologna, Ruysbroeck, Joseph of Cupertino, Nicholas Factor, Teresa of Jesus, Rose of Lima, Marina de Escobar, Agreda, Emmerich, Taigi, Sister Barbara, Gemma Galgani, Benigna Consolata, and many others; and such souls arc in our midst today also. We have had occasion to deal with some of them who, having read no other book but that of Jesus crucified, the true book of life, astonished us when we saw what sublime and marvelous experimental knowledge they had concerning the adorable mystery of the Trinity and of the mysterious workings of the Holy Ghost in the souls of the just.[108]

St. Teresa observes (*Life,* chap. 27): "The soul suddenly finds itself learned, and the mystery of the Most I loly Trinity, together with other lofty things, is so clearly explained to it that there is no theologian with wliom it would not have the boldness to contend in defense of the truth of these marvels."

Thus, although the soul cannot express what is ineffable, when it speaks of the divine attributes which arc to some extent communicable, it is able to find certain analogies, but it must express in human language and as best it can the lofty mysteries of faith. Appreciating that the reality infinitely transcends the representation and that human words will always be deficient, nevertheless, according to our mode of understanding, the soul will speak with a loftiness and precision that amazes and confounds the most learned masters.[109] The reason for this is that in a single very simple idea which God infuses in them in an instant, these persons receive the plenitude of a vast science. St. Teresa adds (*loc, cit.):* "It is like

[108] Dr. Gois, *Annales de pbil. chrét.,* March, 1897: "In our age it is too often forgotten that the method proper to mystical theology is experimental knowledge. . . . The order of grace, like that of nature, has its own laws, and they are discovered by observation and experience. . . . The mystic is not, as is supposed, a man who is raised to truths which are superior to experience, but on the contrary, he is one who by experience verifies truths superior to reason. . . . Today the existence of an invisible world is affirmed through experience, and the necessity of the invisible leads many contemporaries to spiritualism and occultism. This movement to pagan superstition makes more necessary and more timely the study of mystical theology."

[109] For that reason the theologians of the Dominican Convent of St. Paul in Vallodolid, being truly prudent, did not disdain to act as humble disciples of Ven. Marina de Escobar who, at their request, came to give them classes and to give them marvelous explanations of another theology much higher than that learned in schools.

one who, without having learned anything, or having taken the slightest trouble in order to learn to read, or even having ever studied, finds himself in possession of all existing knowledge; he has no idea how or whence it has come." The science which those unlettered persons thus receive and retain is possessed by means of an infused idea which they so assimilate that later they can use it as their own.110

But from the other higher and substantial concepts, souls are not able to retain such clear ideas. They can only recall that they had them and that they were fully aware of seeing the Ineffable by means of that great enlightenment which they so marvelously experienced.111 But the vision passes quickly, and afterward they are not only unable to relate it, since it is inexplicable, but neither can they reproduce it interiorly, for it is inconceivable. Hence we must admit that it was not the light of an infused, created idea, but the immediate impression of the divine reality itself which later hid itself from them and left them in obscurity.112

This fact can clarify many things and perhaps even settle the much debated question of whether such souls sometimes see God intuitively, as do the blessed, or whether they see Him by means of an infused species. Some theologians, too much inclined to the speculative aspect of theology and lacking in experience, devotion, and even the true Christian sense, have a ready tendency to include all these supernatural operations within the narrow molds of their own psychology and even to try to formulate such matters in an adequate syllogism. They try to reduce these things

110 Gratian, *Itiner,* chap. 9: "It is a marvelous thing to see how in the blink of an eye God discloses more concepts and sovereign lights than can be counted. . . . By means of this light many things concerning the dealings of the world are understood as well as the fortunes and condition of many souls."

111 See Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visions,* chap. 27.

1,2 Cf. Ila llae, q. 175, a.4, ad 3. Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 22: "There sometimes shines forth a supernatural desire which is so clearly manifested that it cannot be doubted that it is God Himself who permits Himself to be seen as in a lightning flash. This vision is so sudden and brief that no image remains from it, and one is absolutely unable to know or understand what it was. It knows for certain only that there was something, but it is unable to define it. . . . The subtlety of the light is such that the understanding cannot comprehend it and for that reason it leaves no image. If anything of it remained in a man or his intellect had seized this vision, then undoubtedly it would not have been God, though it could have been something similar to the divine. An angel or the devil or any creature cannot enter into the depth of the soul, but only that supreme Spirit who created it."

to "species" and "forms" and so many "abstractive notions." Consequently they believe that in this life never, or at most very rarely and then by a stupendous miracle, can the divine essence be communicated directly to the soul in such a way that it would serve the soul as an intelligible species.

But truly experienced theologians, and especially the great mystics who have such a vivid awareness of these lofty truths, are not content with speaking of "abstractive notions" and speculative concepts. They speak to us also of truly concrete and immediate perceptions of the divine reality itself.[113] Although they frequently recognize the infusion of permanent ideas, they do not regard the great transitory visions of the divinity as essentially abstractive, but as intuitive; as works of that Spirit who scrutinizes all things, even the depths of God, and with whom these souls are identified. He who adheres to God is one Spirit with Him.

The concepts which souls thus receive are not abstract, but concrete, living, and palpitating, and the knowledge which the Spirit of understanding and wisdom communicate to them is not speculative, but experimental. Without any intermediary, they feel, taste, see, and hear the ineffable God Himself, God of onè and three, after the manner of the blessed, though much more imperfectly and for a very brief time, according as the grade of their purification and the condition of this mortal life permit.[114] They feel that God is truly united to their souls and intellects. They hear the voice of His Word and they see and know Him with the self-

113 See Mary of Agreda, *Mystical City of God,* Part I, Bk. II, chap. 14. Ila Ilae, q.175, a. 3, ad 1; a.4, corp.: "Man's mind is rapt by God to the contemplation of the divine truth in three ways. First, so that he contemplates it through certain imaginary pictures. . . . Secondly, so that he contemplates the divine truth through its intelligible effects. . . . Thirdly, so that he contemplates it in its essence. . . . Now when man's intellect is uplifted to the sublime vision of God's essence, it is necessary that his mind's whole attention should be summoned to that purpose in such a way that he understand naught else by phantasms, and be absorbed entirely in God."

Alvarez de Paz, I, Part III, chap. 1: "We know that the gifts by which God adorns the souls which are called to the grace of contemplation are not confined to the limits of nature and that, even when souls possess these gifts and are not deprived of the use of their external senses, they are usually bathed in such a splendid light and raised to such lofty knowledge that they seem to abandon the use of discursus and they know in the manner of the angels, whose purity of conversation they imitate."

114 St. Augustine (De *Gen. ad lit,* Bk. XII, chap. 28) affirms that St. Paul saw God with that vision with which the saints in heaven see Him.

same clarity which He receives from the Father. They find themselves made one with God, and in the divine light they see the true and eternal Light. In fine, they are certain, with an absolute certainty, of seeing, experiencing, and touching God Himself immediately and not through the medium of any image, representation, or abstraction, however lofty these may be.[115]

Therefore souls say that during such moments they enjoy a prelude of glory, an anticipated glory, and that God dwells in them as in another heaven so that what others know by faith, they know by vision.[118] The light which they receive shares more in the light of glory than in the ordinary light of faith, which is through a mirror and in a dark manner.[117] For although there is still a certain obscurity, since they cannot yet stand such splendor, what they see or perceive is the divine essence itself in which they are, as it were, transformed because of that intimate union which makes them one thing with God.[118]

So the eternal Father said to St. Magdalen of Pazzi: "A fruit of the communication of My essence is a kind of disappearance of faith. . . . By means of that communication I infuse in you My knowledge, which is so profound, clear, and intimate . . . that it seems to pertain more to vision than to faith."[119] The V·en. Marina de Escobar[120] assured her confessor, Father Louis de la

115 See John to; *The Ascent of Mount Carmel,* Bk. II, chap. 26; *Spiritual Canticle,* 14, 15, 39; Blosius, *Inst. Spir.,* chap. 12; St. Bernard, *In Cant.,* sermo 21; and our *Exposition mistica del Cant.,* 2, 9.

116 Interior Castle, seventh mansions, chaps, i, 2; *Life,* chap. 27.

,1T Ila Hae, q.180, a.5: "The highest degree of contemplation in the present life is that which St. Paul had in rapture, whereby he was in a middle state between the present life and the life to come."

118 See St. Teresa, *loc. cit.* To perceive the ineffable mysteries which it is not given man to speak pertains, according to St. Thomas (Ila Ilae, q.175, a.j), to the vision of the blessed. But concerning the vision of St. Paul, he concludes: *Convenientius dicitur quod Deum per essentiam vidit.* Likewise the famous Archbishop Peraldo, O.P. *(Summa virtutum,* Part IV, *Tractatus de donis,* X) says: "Therefore Exodus 33: 'Man shall not see Me and live,' must be interpreted as referring to man's living in a purely human manner, as St. Augustine says *(De Trinitate):* 'The divinity can in no way be seen by human sight, but it seems that God is seen by the vision of those who are no longer men, but more than men.' "

"The mysterious operations of the mystical life," says Monsabré *(Oraison,* chap. 5), "draw souls from the earth and transport them to the shores of the beatific vision." See *Questiones misticas,* Preamb. IV; Vallgornera, *Myst. D. Thom,* q.3, dist. 3; a. 10.

118 Œuvres, IV, chap. 17.

120 Obras, I, III, chap. 2.

Puente, that she had seen the divine essence, contemplating God face to face, and had noted that she saw Him as do the saints in heaven.[121] St. Alphonsus Rodriguez made the same affirmation; and many years before him, the remarkable virgin of Siena testified to it also. All these testimonies are well in accord with the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor.[122]

Although such souls see the divine essence directly and immediately, it is for a very short time, sometimes like a lightning flash, and only in the measure they are capable of receiving the light which God imparts to their intellects.[123] Thus is disclosed to them

121 Blessed Angela de Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 17: "The lofty heights of my life in the past seem low when compared with this. O plenitude! Plenitude! O light which inundates! . . . There is nothing comparable to Thy glory. I have experienced this illumination by God a thousand times, and it has never seemed the same; it is always varied and ever new. . . . What I call the dazzling illumination by God is what the saints enjoy in eternal life."

During the night of the spirit, says St. John of the Cross *(.Dark Night,* II, 12): "the very wisdom of God which purges these souls and illumines them purges the angels from their ignorances, giving them knowledge, enlightening them as to that which they know not, and flowing down from God through the first hierarchies even to the last, and thence to men. ... It plunges him into darkness and causes him affliction and distress, as does the sun to the eye that is weak; it enkindles him with passionate yet afflictive love, until he be spiritualized and refined by this same fire of love; and it purifies him until he can receive with sweetness the union of this loving infusion after the manner of the angels."

122 St. Catherine of Siena energetically stated *(Life,* Part II, 6; and supplement by Caffarini) that she had seen the divine essence itself, the face of God, or which she was able to say only: He is supreme goodness; absolute truth. "Be assured," she said to her confessor, "that I have seen the divine essence and for that reason I suffer greatly at finding myself chained to this body."

St. Thomas (la, q.iz, a.n, ad 2; Ila Ilae, q. 175, a.3) declares not only that it is possible but that it was actually granted to some to be raised to this prodigious vision even in this life. We know, moreover, that there are many mystics who declare that they have seen in the divine essence the reasons for all things. This, according to St. Thomas (Ila Ilae, q. 163, a.i), is impossible without seeing the divine essence itself.

Alvarez de Paz *(De grad, contempt.,* V, 3, 15): "According to all scholastic doctors who treated these things very accurately and with great finesse, it is true or at least probable that some souls living in the flesh can see God clearly and intuitively. But this doctrine ... is treated more at length by the mystical doctors. Some of them indicate that in every age of man, by means of the gift of contemplation in a most excellent degree, this grace has been granted by the Lord so that some have seen Him clearly and intuitively." See also Denis the Carthusian, *De contempt.,* Bk. Ill, no. 24.

St. Bonaventure *(De lumin. eccles. serm. 3)* : "Those enraptured souls do not have the habit of glory, but the act. And just as enraptured souls are at the dividing line between this world and the fatherland, so are they at the dividing line of union with the body and separation from it."

123 We read in the Book of Job (36:32): "In His hands He hideth the light, and commandeth it to come again." This is interpreted as follows by St. Bernard in his

now one attribute, now another. Only after the spiritual marriage, in which the soul is strengthened, is the divine essence manifested in a clear and permanent manner so that they enjoy a quasi-habitual vision of the mystery of the Trinity. Thus whenever the soul recollects itself it is conscious of the presence of the three divine persons.[124] Sometimes neither sleep nor great occupations impede the soul from enjoying this loving vision, and the soul lives among men after the manner of the angels who are charged with our care.

That vision makes souls completely happy, and up to a certain point they are happy even in the midst of the greatest sufferings.[125] But since the vision is often accompanied by a certain obscurity which causes great anxiety and impulses, and since frequently it is ordained to further purification or to make souls serve as expiatory and propitiatory victims for the good of the entire Church, that ineffable pleasure is generally associated with intolerable martyrdoms of love, at least until the spiritual matrimony is reached.

This participation in the sorrows of Christ, like the sharing in His glories, is characteristic of all His faithful imitators who have reached the state of configuration with Him. St. Teresa, in the midst of the most delicate and almost continual favors which she merited, affirmed that she had not passed a single day without great sufferings. The very ecstasy produced by the gentle divine touch and especially the rapture which absorbs souls in an inaccessible light, although always delicious and salutary, are at the same time most painful. This proceeds not only from the condition of these souls, but also from the special attributes which God manifests and other complementary knowledge which He adds. When He discloses to souls His infinite sanctity and justice and His supreme aversion for sin, and also makes them see and feel their own noth-

famous *Epistola ad Fratres de Monte Dei:* "To the elect and the beloved of God there is sometimes manifested a certain light of the divine face. It is like the light which was hidden in His hands and which is manifested or hidden according to the will of the one who holds it so that, when seen suddenly and for a moment, the spirit is inflamed for the full possession of the eternal light. And in order that the soul may know what it yet lacks, grace sometimes binds the senses of the lover and leads him to a day that is without tumult and to the joys of silence. According to its capacity, God Himself is manifested for an instant so that the soul can see Him as He is. Meanwhile God gradually transforms the soul into Himself so that it may be, as far as is possible, like unto Him who is."

124 See *Interior Castle,* seventh mansions, chap. i.

126 Matt. 5:11 f.; Luke 6:22 f.

ingness and wretchedness, then at the same time that they swoon away in love, they are cast into a most profound sorrow. This sorrow penetrates to their very bones and leaves them prostrate for days, without any strength. The greater the light they receive and the appreciation they have of God, the greater is their prostration, abasement, and self-contempt, and it seems to them that all hell would be little to atone for their ingratitudes.

Thus is understood their profound annihilation and prodigious humility, as deeply felt as it is sincere, which makes them regard themselves as nothing in the midst of the great favors they experience. They see themselves sanctified and deified and they feel themselves radiant with divine knowledge and power; yet they are totally prostrated and attribute nothing to themselves. Amid the great divine favors which they receive, they are confused and filled with ardent desires to make known their nothingness and the infinite mercies of Him who has thus enriched them. So St. Teresa adverts that true humility does not consist in ignoring the excellence of the gifts received from God, but in recognizing them, in order to give thanks for them and not to appropriate the glory to oneself. "Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me."

In like manner, when God shows these souls the great evils in the Church,[126] the necessity for expiation, the crimes of so many Christians, the sacrileges of unworthy priests, the horror of schisms and dissensions which threaten to dislocate the members of the mystical body, and the force with which this whole weight of sin oppressed the Savior in the Garden, then they truly share in His agony and bloody sweat and accompany Him in all His sacred passion. They help Him to carry His cross, and across the centuries they prolong the sacrifice of Calvary.

But if they bear always the mortification of Jesus, the very life of Jesus is also clearly manifested in their mortal bodies. Though they find their way strewn with crosses, through them they re-

126 Alvarez de Paz, *De nat. contempl.,* V, II, chap. 2: "This is a contemplation of the state of the Church militant. There is proposed to the soul, by an unusual light, the dignity and sanctity of its mother. How ardently she is loved by God, her Spouse; how stoutly she is defended from all falsity! How she is made a column of truth, and how faithfully she is freed from temptations and persecutions of tyrants and heretics; how gently she is filled with saints and perfect men; how mercifully she is sustained in the face of rebellious sons and sinners; how infallibly she is called to a reward in the predestined! . . . How different is the face of the Church when superficially looked upon from when it is seen through the light of contemplation!"

ceive for themselves and for others the salvation and the life that will enable them to enjoy, in spite of all things else, an anticipated glory. By means of the Spirit of revelation which they possess, they are the light of the world; by means of their continual sufferings, they are the salt of the earth. Alas, the day when such souls should be lacking! 127

But such souls will never be wanting. In spite of all the malice of the world, such souls will continue to appear as there is need for them, and more and more abundantly. May the Lord give us His Spirit of revelation in order that we may know and love Him and be able to appreciate as we ought the grandeur and the splendor which He deigns to grant to His faithful servants! 128

The saints carry on the Savior's mission. With Him they are placed as a sign of contradiction, and at the same time they save and judge the world. He who hears and accepts them, hears and accepts Christ Himself, and thus finds light, salvation, and life. He who despises the saints, despises Jesus Christ129 and, not being moved by their heroic example, he incurs the most terrifying judgment. Such a one has already judged himself.130

APPENDIX

i. Wise Ignorance and Presumptuous Knowledge

St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue,* chap. 85:

The presumptuous learned ones, blinded by their pride and self-love, are deprived of the light by which the Scriptures were formed and declared. Thus, in their reflections they taste only the letter and not the

127 "When prophecy shall fail, the people shall he scattered abroad" (Prov. 29:18).

128 Eph. 1:17-19. Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 38: "These souls, though hidden, are the true friends of God and by their devout prayers they sustain Christianity. So great is the compassion which sinners arouse in them that they would gladly die if by their death they could lead others to the Lord. Why do we suppose that the just Judge suffers sinners for such a long time and does not inflict a chastisement? Principally it is because these souls, united in spirit with the wounds of the Lord, draw from those wounds copious graces." See St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue,* chap. 143.

128 Luke 10:16; Matt. 10:14-40.

130 Blessed Angela of Foligno once heard the following words *(op. cit.,* chap. 29): "The omnipotent God has chosen thee and has placed His love in thee. In thee He finds His delight, in thee and in thy company. Thy life, then, should be light and mercy for those who consider it; justice and judgment for those who look not upon it." Then Blessed Angela adds, "Then my soul saw that this judgment would be more terrible for priests than for the laity because their disdain for divine things is made more horrible by reason of the knowledge they have of the Scriptures."

substance of the doctrine. Therefore they marvel and even murmur when they see that unlettered persons surpass them in the knowledge of truth and possess it as if they had studied for a long time. But this should not cause astonishment, for such souls possess the principal font of light from which science emanates. . . . Therefore it is better to seek salutary advice from these humble and upright persons than from the learned persons who are proud. . . . I say this, My daughter, that you may know the perfection of the unitive state in which the eye of the understanding is attracted by the fire of My charity wherein supernatural splendors reside. By that light illumined souls love Me, because love follows upon understanding, and the more they know the more do they love, and the more they love the more they know, for the one is nourished by the other. By this light they arrive at the eternal vision wherein they truly taste Me. . . . This is that most excellent state in which, even though mortals, they rejoice with the immortal. Many times this union is so great that they know not whether they are in the body or out of it and they are united with Me in such a way that they enjoy even now the pledges of eternal life.

In this way, by contemplation, as St. Thomas says (IIa, IIae, q. 180, a. 4), there is effected in us a certain inchoation of beatitude which begins here and will be continued in the future.

2. The Secret Word and the Sensation of the Ineffable

Blosius, *Inst.*, chap. 12:

Blessed is the soul that is dedicated to the cultivation of purity of heart and exercises itself in holy introspection, that renounces self-love and its own will and seeks itself in nothing. Such a soul merits to approach closer and closer to God until, elevated, illumined, and adorned with divine grace in its higher faculties, it attains to unity and nudity of the spirit and a pure love and simple knowledge without images. . . . Its faculties shine like the stars, and it is made capable of contemplating with serene, simple, and joyful gaze the abyss of the divinity. . . . The natural light of the intellect is blinded by such clarity. It perceives nothing as temporal but, rising above time and place, it takes on the characteristic of eternity. . . . It sees by experience that God transcends all corporal, and spiritual representation and all that could be said or thought of Him for it clearly perceives that all this is infinitely removed from the truth of the divine essence, which is in itself indescribable. . . . It rests in that hidden and

lovable God whom it feels, for the divine light, by its excessive brilliance, is inaccessible and for that reason is called a darkness. There the soul receives the secret word which God speaks to it in the silence of its mind and it experiences the close embrace of the mystical union. . . . Swooning away, it empties itself in God, who is its peace and its joy. The enamored soul is liquified, I say, and it faints away. It is, as it were, annihilated, losing itself in the abyss of eternal love where it dies to self to live in God, not feeling or knowing anything else but the love which it tastes. But the loss of self in divinity is rather a finding of self because, being stripped of everything human and clothed in the divine, the soul is transformed and changed into God, as iron placed in the fire becomes fire. Nevertheless the essence of the deified soul remains, just as the igneous iron does not cease to be iron. But that which formerly was cold is now inflamed, that which was formerly darkness is now light, and that which was formerly hard is now soft. Yet it is now of a divine color for its essence is absorbed in God. The whole soul is inflamed with the fire of divine love; the whole soul is changed and passes into God and is united to Him without any intermediary. It is made one spirit with Him, just as gold and copper are fused into the one mass of metal.

O what a happy hour is that in which the soul, experiencing the divine union, enjoys the prelude to eternal happiness! Then it experiences what no tongue can express and no reason can surmise. . . . It is so firmly established in God that it feels closer to Him than it does to itself. Thus does it now live a deiform and superessential life, being made conformable to Christ according to spirit, soul, and body. Now when it eats, drinks, keeps vigil, or sleeps, all these things are worked in it by God who dwells in the soul in a superessential manner. God teaches the soul all things and opens to it the treasures of spiritual and mystical knowledge. With great frequency He visits it, draws it to Himself, caresses it, illumines it, inflames it, penetrates it, and fills it. The soul is now a clear and stainless mirror and the rays of the wisdom and charity of the Sun of justice are reflected in it.

Denis the Carthusian, *De fonte lucis,* a. 15:

When the Omnipotent manifests this light to the mind, He conquers it by the enormity of His greatness and the excellence of His majesty, perfection, and great brilliancy. All this is done in a moment, in the blink of an eye, and not violently, but sweetly. He oppresses the soul so that, . . . overcome by love and stupefied with admiration for the immense clarity and majesty which is contemplated and the delicious serenity of the deity which it perceives, it will know nothing of self. Indeed it is

suddenly so greatly illumined and inflamed that it immediately succumbs and loses its bodily powers and senses. Then is the mind led into the secrets of uncreated light and submerged in the abyss of infinite light. Enraptured, it is lost in the ocean of eternal happiness . . . not knowing where it is or how it arrived there. . . . Then the God of infinite pleasure makes known to the beloved that it is in His possession, and the soul, spurning everything carnal and transitory, desires nothing but God.

3. Sufferings of the Servants of Christ

Emmerich, *Life,* p. 41 (by Brent):

I saw an enormous bodv horribly mutilated and raised up towards the heavens. . . . The torso was covered with terrible wounds. Some were fresh wounds and bled profusely and others were covered with dead skin. One side of the bodv was black, gangrenous, and corrupt. I experienced in myself all these sufferings and then my guide said to me, "this is the body of the Church." Then, showing me each wound, he indicated to me a part of the world. I saw an infinite number of men and cities separated from the Church, each in its own manner and I felt this separation as painfully as if they had been separated from my own body. Then my guide said to me, "Learn the meaning of your sufferings and offer them to God with those of Jesus Christ for those who have been separated. One member must invoke another and suffer to cure him and unite him to the body."

Sister Barbara, *Vida,* p. 444:

It is a painful sight to see souls who not only run but fly to precipitate themselves into hell. . . . This is a martyrdom for me because I see that the blood of my God is rejected. . . . With great sorrow I said to my God: "Is it possible that so many souls, who have cost Thee so dearly, will perish? Give to me the punishment which they deserve and let them be saved. Put me at the gates of hell so that no more souls may enter therein for my heart cannot bear the pain of seeing more souls lost. . . . Ah, Father, how great is my sorrow when I see my God so offended and I am powerless to remedy it, for if I were but able, I would give my life a thousand times if I could thereby gain but one soul for God. . . . Willingly would I undertake great sacrifices to make Him loved, adored, and glorified throughout the world. Would that I could take into my hands the hearts of the whole world and consecrate them all to God."

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* IV, chap. 5: "There is no greater suffering for a soul that loves Thee than to see sinners unconverted; that is, not to see Thee, O sovereign Good, dwelling through grace in Thy

creature for whom Thou hast suffered so much; to see Thy blood shed in vain. . . . Would that it were not so, my Love. Let me rather die! Here is my body, my blood, my soul; I offer all to Thee. Let fall upon me instead all the crosses, all the punishments, all the torments of hell . . . so that the creatures made in Thy likeness may be saved and the lost sheep may return to the fold of the divine Shepherd." [131]

4. How the Saints Save and Judge the World

Weiss, *Apolog.*, X, 24:

In His merciful Providence God sent each saint to remind the world of its duties and to save it from its corrupt life. The saints, whose lives are a flagrant contradiction to the worldly spirit in general and to that of their own age in particular, are selected as instruments of salvation by the compassionate Doctor of the nations. But he who does not accept them as mediators, must accept them as judges, just as he must accept Jesus Christ, who did not come to judge the world, but to save it (John 3:17).

"Know you not that the saints shall judge this world?" (I Cor. 6:2.) And the world will be convinced of three things: of sin, of justice, and of judgment (John 16:8). The world will be convinced of sin, and this judgment will be passed by the world itself. For its own conscience convinces it of sin just as the punishments of God convince it of judgment.

But it is further necessary that the world be convinced of justice so that it cannot accuse God of demanding the impossible. This judgment is reserved to the saints. Their lives, with their defects, their conversion, their punishments, their great struggles, their works of supererogation, constitute the book by which we shall be judged (St. Gregory the Great, *Morales,* 24, 16, 18). But the saints realize this task even here below and very plainly, however much others may close their eyes. Yet, for those who receive the saints, they are a great means of salvation.

A people will never fall hopelessly into corruption as long as they have a single saint. Thanks be to God, saints are immortal, and even today they have not disappeared. God knows His own (II Tim. 2:19). Let it not be thought that they exert scant influence because they do not make a great deal of noise. On the contrary, the more hidden they are, the more time they have to work. They exercise a great influence precisely because they do not waste time in calling the attention of the world upon themselves. There is not a single saint, even the most silent and humble, who did not possess the characteristics of salt, for every saint has at least prevented the spreading of corruption.

[131] See Faber, *All for Jesus,* chap. 3.

Importance of Private Revelations

From what has been said up to this point one can understand the supreme importance of the interior teaching of the Holy Ghost in the Christian life. This is manifested not only in the continual illustrations which just souls receive and in the marvelous assistance by which He preserves Church councils and pontiffs from errors, but also in His frequent revelations, sensible or intellectual, and in the gifts of prophecy and discernment of spirits by which he continually favors so many souls. For He must always be making friends of God and prophets [132] and pouring forth His Spirit on young men and old.[133]

One will also understand the caution with which the Church and all prudent souls evaluate private revelations in order to test the spirit and to judge whether they are of God, so as not to despise them or confuse them with the human errors which are liable to enter in or the diabolical suggestions which strive to imitate them. These latter suggestions can always be identified by their disguised and insidious attacks against the purity of our holy faith or pious customs. Human errors, on the other hand, can be distinguished by their emptiness and futility.

We have already pointed out that the sensible visions and locutions with which God favors many pious souls in order to illumine them more clearly and distinctly, in accordance with their capacity, though of themselves very trustworthy, can nevertheless be the occasion of error and deception. This comes about by reason of the details which the soul is liable to add inadvertently or by the soul's taking for a reality what is a symbol or giving a material signification to words which God speaks in another sense.[134]

[132] Wisd. 7:27.

[133] Joel 2:28.

[134] *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, 18 f.: "Revelations or locutions which are of God do not always turn out as men expect or as they imagine inwardly. And thus they must never be believed or trusted blindly, even though men know them to be revelations or answers or sayings of God. For, although they may in themselves be certain and true, they are not always so in their causes, and according to our manner of understanding. . . . For two reasons we have said that, although visions and locutions which come from God are true, and in themselves are always certain, they are not always so with respect to ourselves. One reason is the defective way in which we understand them; and the other, the variety of their causes. In the first place, it is clear that they are not always as they seem, nor do they turn out as

In successive locutions error and confusion can enter into their very substance, for the soul composes the entire locution on its own account. But formal communications, and especially revelations which are entirely intellectual (whether locutions or visions) do not of themselves admit of any deception, for the soul receives them from God without doing anything to contribute to them. Yet there can be errors in the mode of expressing these revelations, as well as in appreciating, interpreting, and representing them, and all these errors are reducible to the human mind. In assimilating them for the purpose of understanding and expressing them better, the soul inadvertently and unintentionally introduces certain human elements which open the way to inaccuracies. Though the soul believes itself to be attempting only to understand what God speaks or manifests to it, actually it sometimes considers or interprets these things in its own manner. Therefore, in translating into human language some of the intellectual communications which are expressible, in spite of the fact that they are of themselves luminous and lofty, the soul may distort them to a certain extent.

Far different is the case of the spiritual concepts that proceed from the mysterious divine touch which makes the truth tasted. In that instance the soul does not assimilate or interpret in a human manner but, completely governed by the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, it penetrates, feels, tastes, and touches these ineffable realities, not humanly but in a divine manner. Thus, if any error manifests itself at the end, it is not in that pure and spiritual sensation but only in the communication which is made to

they appear to our manner of thinking. The reason for this is that, since God is vast and boundless, He is wont, in His prophecies, locutions and revelations, to employ ways, concepts and methods of seeing things which differ greatly from such purpose and method as can normally be understood by ourselves; and these are the truer and more certain the less they seem so to us. . . . In this way, and in many other ways, souls are oftentimes deceived with respect to locutions and revelations that come from God, because they interpret them according to their apparent sense and literally; whereas, as has already been explained, the principal intention of God in giving these things is to express and convey the spirit that is contained in them, which is difficult to understand. And the spirit is much more pregnant in meaning than the letter, and is very extraordinary, and goes far beyond its limits. And thus, he that clings to the letter, or to a locution or to a form or figure of a vision, which can be apprehended, will needs go far astray, and will forthwith fall into great confusion and error, because he has guided himself by sense according to these visions, and not allowed the spirit to work in detachment from sense. *Littera enim occidit, spiritus enim vivificat,* as St. Paul says (II Cor. 3:6). That is: The letter killeth and the spirit giveth life."

others, granted the impossibility of faithfully translating it into human language because of the necessary disproportion and inaccuracy of all terms and symbols which, however noble they may be, are always infinitely removed from that ineffable impression of the divine.[135] For this reason souls thus favored feel a repugnance in speaking of these ineffable things for any motive whatever. They see clearly the inexactitude and lowliness of words which seem to them to be not expressions of truth, but blasphemies. Therefore they repeat with the Apostle: These are secrets which it is not lawful to utter.

As regards more frequent locutions, when they are lengthy and repeated and when they are not purely intellectual, it is to be supposed that ordinarily they belong to the group of successive locutions in which are found human interferences suspect of error. Therefore certain creditable writings can be distorted to a certain extent so far as they can be affected in this way. Even when the locutions have been transmitted at one stroke, by means of a simple idea which the soul later tries to penetrate and express in its own way, the same thing may happen, for the soul must reflect and compare and thus it introduces many of its own personal evaluations. These personal evaluations are present even when the manifestation is made by the soul without any force or effort and very graphic and expressive words come to the person's mouth or pen. For basically these things represent the soul's own resources, and for that reason in each compilation there is reflected the natural character of each person.

Hence, in spite of the deserved credence which some of these

[135] A certain soul, accustomed to this type of experience, has stated that the attempt to translate these profound and intimate communications can be mixed with something natural, but the understanding and tasting of them, never. It is the divine touch of love and glory which is impressed on the soul to bind it with chains of purest gold made strong in the fire of love. For that reason the soul knows who it is that works and what the divine touch is, because of the effects which it experiences: it is consumed and annihilated and knows nothing. God possesses the soul in such a manner that the soul has nothing and can and wishes to have nothing except its God.

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 54: "In other lower communications, such as the sensible ones, God permits the soul to deceive itself and He does so to prevent the soul from departing from Him, for He loves the soul with a jealous love. Then He submerges it in the abyss wherein it learns two types of knowledge: that of self and that of God. Here there can be no error; the soul sees pure truth. . . . It sees the two abysses simultaneously, and the mode of its knowledge is a secret between itself and God."

writings enjoy and the high esteem in which the Church holds them, since the human element is frequently to be found in each interpretation or compilation (especially if they were compiled or retouched by the hand of another), such writings are far from being infallible and may easily contain certain inaccuracies or false evaluations. Hence they do not always agree among themselves, even the most authentic and highly authorized of them.[136] However precious they may be, private revelations cannot be compared with public or canonical revelations, whose infallibility of interpretation and compilation is guaranteed by the inspiration itself.

Yet private revelations do not on this account cease to be of great value for the edification of the faithful and the Church as a whole.[137] They possess this value because they augment piety, excite fervor, and raise the spirit of the times, and because they also contribute efficaciously to the promotion of disciplinary and liturgical progress and even to the advance of dogmatic theology. Hence the Spirit of revelation which the Apostle ardently desired for all the followers of Christ can never be lacking in the Catholic Church.[138]

136 Catherine Emmerich states in her *Passion of Jesus Christ* (sect. 28) that many of the things narrated by persons favored with visions are symbolic intuitions which vary according to the state of the soul and that the soul can inadvertently take them for realities. This is a source of numerous contradictions.

"I was divinely assured," says Father Hoyos (p. 263), "that, although one's own soul interjects itself in regard to certain accidental details, as happens when one thing is revealed and the imagination adds another circumstance to it, yet God would never permit such an error in regard to the substance of the thing. Nor is there any fault on the part of the soul in asserting as revealed by God some circumstance which the imagination has added, for the soul has been convinced of this circumstance. Therefore all should pass through the spiritual director whom God will assist so that he can discern the precious from the base. For although men commonly think that it is one and the same thing to say that a certain thing comes from a person favored by God and that it is a prophecy or revelation, such is not the case. For all that the prophets said was not spoken by God. Therefore, though the spiritual director is certain that God is the author of a revelation, he must examine the circumstances and approve only what prudence, experience, and the like dictate. God desires all things to be subjected to His visible ministers."

For that reason St. Paul charges the Thessalonians (I Thess. 3:20 f.) not to despise prophetic lights but at the same time to examine them and retain only the good. St. Thomas observes (IIa IIae, q.8, a.4; q.9, a.3; q.45, a.5) that the saints never lack the light of understanding in regard to those things which are necessary for salvation, but they do sometimes lack other things so that they may thereby preserve humility. See also *ibid.*, q.163, a.4; q. 171, a.2.

137 I Cor. 14:4.

138 Prov. 29:18; Amos 3:7. "My divine Spouse," says Catherine Emmerich (*Life of Our Lord*, Introd., p. xv), "gives me these visions and He has given them through

Thus does the sovereign Spirit of wisdom take delight in conversing with the children of men, that Spirit who through nations conveys Himself into holy souls and makes friends of God and prophets.[139] He manifests to the little ones the prodigious treasures of grace and truth which are hidden from the wise and presumptuous.[140]

Who would not be filled with admiration at seeing the marvel of lights and the sublimity of concepts in souls thus enriched by the divine Spirit? Who would not be amazed at the nobility of language which they spontaneously employ whenever they express the words spoken by God or the Blessed Virgin, while the things spoken on their own account are filled with simplicity and candor? Whence comes that loftiness of ideas and that elegance and purity of style in souls lacking all human culture? What power of suggestion could infuse in them at one stroke that remarkable science which they have never studied and those sublime concepts which they have learned from no other person? [141] This is a positive fact against which all human explanations are shattered, however much they

all the ages in order to manifest that He desires to he with His Church until the end of time. ... It is lamentable that many of these revelations have been lost, and those who are especially responsible for this are those members of the clergy who, for lack of faith, did not collect them. God will exact of them a severe accounting." It was also said to her that "the good effects which these visions ought to produce are hindered to some extent by the suppressions and changes made by certain learned priests who lack the simplicity to understand them. Many times they reject very precious things because they were unable to distinguish the historical part of a vision from the symbolic part and the personal element which is mixed with it. ... I also saw how many precious treasures were wasted because of the preoccupation of certain confessors to accommodate the visions of their penitents to their own manner of understanding the Gospel."

139 Wisd. 7:27.

140 Matt. 11:25.

141 It is said of St. Brigid (*Prologue* of Alphonsus, chap. 4) that in one instant she saw all the inhabitants of heaven, earth, and hell and knew what one said to another. In the same place it is verified that she received instantaneously the entire content of the fifth book of her *Revelations* and the Rule of her Order which fills forty columns in folio edition. St. Alphonsus Rodriguez affirms that, having been transported to heaven, he saw and knew all the blessed together and each one distinctly as if he had passed his whole life with them. St. Teresa says a similar thing. Anna Maria Taigi, in the nineteenth century, was able to see continually, after the fashion of a mysterious sun, all the doings, plots, and secret conspiracies of the enemies of the Church and the state of their souls. But although she could see there as in a mirror all that she wished to see, she never gazed upon it except when necessity or obedience obliged her.

may appeal to suggestion, contagion, telepathy, or any other influence which is not supernatural.[142]

St. Rose of Lima, afflicted at having to take away from prayer the time required to learn to read and write, asked God to instruct her and suddenly, to the admiration of all, she found herself fully instructed.[143] St. Catherine of Siena never learned to write or even to read, and therefore she had to find someone to read and write her copious correspondence. Yet she was able to dictate at the same time two or even four letters concerning the most weighty and varied matters, without ever losing the trend of thought and with a remarkable speed and sureness.[144] She who had always been so weak was able to pass long periods of time with no other food than the Eucharist. With the strength which she received from this heavenly food she could, in spite of her infirmities, undertake great enterprises and, by the light which it communicated to her, she was able to understand the contents of letters by merely glancing at them, although she would have been unable to spell out the meaning. She begged God to give her a knowledge of Latin in order better to profit from the prayers of the Church, and she was immediately instructed in that language.[145]

What could suggestion or telepathy avail here? And these things are not to be considered a rare event; some of them are frequent.[140]

142 "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay" (Luke 21:15).

143 Sec Hansen, *Life,* Bk. 1, chap. 28. With almost equal facility, remarks the same biographer (chap. 3), she learned perfectly how to perform the most delicate labors and she found herself versed in music, poetry, and song. She was suddenly seen and heard to play the harp, the zither, and the guitar, although no one had ever instructed her. Her remarkable science astounded the greatest theologians (chap. !$)·

144 None of her secretaries, says a biographer, ever had to wait for her and, what is even more remarkable, none of them ever heard what she was dictating to the others.

145 Life, I, xi.

146 Blessed Hosanna of Mantua miraculously learned how to read and write. She was taught by the Blessed Virgin, who at the same time instructed her in Latin, which Hosanna made much use of in her letters. Ven. Michaela Aguirre was also instructed in a miraculous manner in reading and writing and she promised never to use them except in God's service. St. Hildegard did not know Latin and neither how to read or to write, and yet she acquired all this miraculously. She read whole sections at once, perceiving the meaning of sentences, although unable to distinguish the words. She also dictated in Latin, though it was necessary to correct her style. She received all her doctrine from a light which she received uninterruptedly during her waking hours since the age of three. She called this light the shadow of the

Many souls, on hearing certain verses of the psalms or of the Canticle of Canticles, which pertained to them especially in their present state, understood these verses clearly without knowing a word of Latin, and not only the literal sense but even the mystical sense hidden beneath the letter. Others, on hearing them and not knowing Latin, would seek someone to translate them and would then immediately penetrate to their spiritual meaning.[147]

But it is not to be wondered at that the great mystics received such lights when they had as their Master Him who is wisdom itself. They were so illumined that they seemed almost to have been granted the *lumen gloriae.* Nor is it surprising that in the midst of their sufferings they should possess such powers, since rather than living on earth where they were still wayfarers, they were already living in heaven, wherein they had their conversation and continually enjoyed ineffable delights, the least of which incomparably surpasses all human joys taken together and seemed to them an excessive reward for all their labors. In such delights they saw the prelude and anticipated joy of eternal glory whose exercise consists in knowing the one true God. They already knew and possessed Him in the depths of their hearts so that they lived in Him alone and were transformed in Him.[148]

living light and reserved the name light for a more lofty knowledge which now and then was communicated to her about God. All that she knew of human matters was communicated to her, as she said, in an instant. See *Opera,* Aligne, cols. i8, 13, 103, 104, 384. Although A'cn. Hyppolita Rocabcrti, O.P., knew Latin very well and was able to use it with great facility, she declared that she had never studied it but that listening to the heart of the Church and reposing on the breast of the Lord, the Paraclete breathed on her and taught her not only all this but even greater things which are the mysteries contained in the words of the Church.

147 Gratian, *Itiner.,* chap. 9: "There appears within the soul a vital and efficacious figure which immediately passes awav like a flash of lightning, but it always leaves a trace of much doctrine and understanding and much movement of the will. . . . Sometimes there arc spoken within the soul clear and fully formed interior words, of such delicacy and subtlety that it seems God is writing them with His divine finger on the tablet of the heart. . . . Sometimes it happens that the words are Latin and the one who knows not Latin does not understand them, but when one who knows Latin translates them the soul finds that they contain counsels of great importance." See *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 26; St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 15.

148 Blosius, *Institutio spiritualis,* chap. 12: "By means of a wise ignorance and an intimate contact of love the soul knows God better than the external eyes see the visible sun. It is so fixed in God that it feels He is closer to it than it is to itself. Whence it then lives a life that is deiform and superessential. God Himself teaches such a soul all things and opens to it the spiritual and mystical senses. Repeatedly

O marvelous progress whose limit is God Himself! O truly prodigious evolution which thus deifies us by transforming us into God!

Will the enemies of light and progress still call us retarded, antiquated, and reactionary? Poor nearsighted men, who do not see that their type of evolution is a revolution and degradation and that their progress is actually a retrogression. Their well thought-out evolution casts them into an abyss lower than the plants, and their exaggerated progress stupefies them and buries them in mire and darkness. Poor autonomous reason which attempts to deify itself and be the absolute norm of everything, but is incapable of knowing the "all" of anything or of making the least correction or modification in the divine operation. Poor foolish reason which, unable to understand the most insignificant thing or a single atom, presumes to pass judgment on the loftiest mysteries. Poor infatuated reason, blinded by the rays of the infinite light, prefers to pronounce its judgment and close its eyes and live in darkness like a nocturnal bird, rather than strengthen its vision with the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.[149] Poor misguided reason, fleeing from the great, the noble, and the divine, which are the only things that can enrich and perfect it, cannot help but be degenerated, vitiated, and degraded. Desiring to be sufficient unto itself, it abandons itself to its own powers and busies itself with fatuities or bagatelle, if not burying itself in uncleanness which obscures and perverts it.

O reason, whatever you succeed in discovering apart from God, the more it enlightens you the more it will disillusion and deceive you. Ultimately it will avail you but little when, fleeing as you do from the very source of light and life, you end in the exterior darkness. If, by following the proud banner whose theme is "I will not serve," you disown the loving God who redeemed you and regenerated you with His blood and thus lose the torch of divine faith received at baptism, well can we lament over you as over the cruel prince to whom you have delivered yourself: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning!

He visits the soul, draws it to Himself, kisses it, illumines, inflames, penetrates, and fills it. . . . Very sublimely . . . does God reveal Himself to the perfect soul."

149 "And this is the judgment: because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light: for their,works were evil" (John 3:19).

. . . But yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit." [150]

"But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." [151]

[150] Isa. 14:12-15.
[151] II Cor. 3:18.

CHAPTER IX

Doctrinal Questions

sSSsss&sSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSssSSsSSSsSSSsSSSssSSsSS&ssSsSSSsSSSssSSssssSssSSssSSssssSsSSSssSSsSSSsSSSssSSs

IT is frequently said that infused contemplation is so extraordinary a gift that it is reserved for only the most rare souls and that for the generality of souls who are called spiritual it would be presumptuous and futile to desire or ask for contemplation, even more so to try to dispose themselves to attain it. From this follows the lamentable opinion which states that to be a good spiritual director one does not need any special knowledge of mystical theology. As if it were by the greatest chance that one meets a single soul that has been placed in those "dangerous extraordinary ways"! Therefore, when a soul takes its spiritual progress seriously and, led by the Holy Ghost, aspires to reach a type of prayer somewhat superior to ordinary prayer, alas for that soul! Such directors accuse it of audacity and illusion and thus, as Father Lallemant remarks,[1] "they forever close to it the gates of these gifts; and this is a great abuse."

Many there are, unfortunately, who commit this abuse today, imitating the scribes and Pharisees whom our Lord greatly censured because they themselves had not entered in and those who were entering in they hindered.[2] As Jansenist rigorism used its subtleties to keep souls from frequent Communion under the pretext of unworthiness and thus deprived them of the bread of life which is the principal remedy for one's weakness, so other rigorists, under pretexts of false humility which are no less vain and by which they try to cover their own sloth and lowly aspirations, do all in their power to keep souls from these other communications to which

1 *Spiritual Doctrine,* VII, chap. 4, art. 3.
2 Luke 11:52; Matt. 23:13.

the Lord is perhaps even now inviting them. By insisting on a "sure" procedure, they work toward destroying the delights which divine Wisdom finds in dwelling with the sons of men.

The Desire for Contemplation and Mystical Union

Whatever is a true positive good is of itself desirable and we may ask it of God. And if it is licit for us to ask for, to desire, and to put forth great efforts for the acquisition of health, knowledge, and sharpness of wit, so also it ought to be lawful, as Sandeo points out,[3] to seek, desire, and strive for so superior a good as the health, knowledge, and penetration which the divine Spirit communicates.[4]

There is not the least presumption in this if it is desired with the right intention, just as there is no presumption in the desire to receive Communion in order to please God and to nourish and fortify our souls. Presumption lies in desiring these things from motives of vainglory, and not when they are sought as an aid for our weakness, to establish us in humility and all the other virtues, to make us grow in the grace and knowledge of God and in all things, according to Jesus Christ, until we arrive at the fullness of perfect and truly spiritual men. We already know that no one can be such unless he is animated, directed, and governed by the divine Spirit and greatly enriched by His precious gifts.[5] If the awareness of one's[8]

[3] *Théologie mystique,* p. 198.

[4] I Cor. 14:1.

[5] According to Sauvé *(Le culte du* C. *de J.,* élev. 26), "we should desire from the mystical states only the increase of light in the intellect, of love in the heart, and of the union of the soul with God, and not the extraordinary favors. Our desire should be humble and prompted by the desire for our sanctification."

Yet even those favors which are totally extraordinary can sometimes be desired licitly if the desire is prompted by a pure zeal for the glory of God and our own spiritual advancement and that of our neighbor. The remarkable humility of Blessed James of Cadiz did not prevent him from desiring the power to work miracles. St. Paul tells us (I Cor. 14:12), "Seek to abound unto the edifying of the Church."

But for the present, Lallemant says *(op. cit.,* seventh principle, chap, j, art. 3), "contemplation is true wisdom. This it is the books of Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, and Ecclesiasticus recommend so much. They who dissuade others from it are guilty of a great error. There is no danger in it when we bring to it the requisite dispositions. . . . The holy Apostle exhorts the faithful to desire these spiritual gifts, and particularly that of prophecy, which consists not only in predicting things to come, but also in understanding the Scriptures, in expounding them, and instructing the people. . . . True it is that we must not of ourselves intrude into these kinds of prayer; but at the same time we ought not to refuse them when God offers them, nor actually do anything which may have the effect of preventing his admitting us to them when he pleases."

unworthiness restrains him, that of charity impels him. From the very beginning, says St. Bernard,® the fervent soul desires and eagerly begs for the kiss of the mouth of its Beloved, although in the meantime it is content to kiss His feet, exercising itself in works of humility by means of which, sooner or later, it will hear the voice which says: "Go up higher" or "Arise, make haste, my love, and come."

In itself the mystical union is the greatest good, exempt from all dangers, and there is no reason why it should not also be esteemed and desired to the highest degree. It is true that sensible or really extraordinary favors, which are sometimes manifested outwardly in an unusual manner, and revelations pertaining to creatures, although good and profitable in themselves, can offer dangers and be put to vain uses. For that reason they are to be feared *per accidens,* though not *per se.* But intimate union and communication with God, in which lies our true happiness and sanctity, and all the revelations relative to God which follow upon this union, of themselves produce a great increase of virtue, grace, and self-knowledge as well as a knowledge of God Himself, and there is nothing about these things that should make us distrustful of them. They are always good and profitable, and for that reason always lovable and desirable to the highest degree.

It is true that these things are io a certain extent gratuitous gifts and that God gives them, as St. Teresa observes, to whom He pleases and when He pleases and all our efforts would be insufficient to attain them. But they are not, as is often supposed, *gratiae gratis datae.* They are favors which God bestows only on the just, for God could not unite Himself and communicate Himself so intimately and in so friendly a manner with one who is not in His grace.† These favors at basis are distinct types of divine touches because they are a consequence of the *sensus Christi* and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which grow with charity. They will not be denied to souls that seek them with great humility and perseverance and that, though they may wait a long time before receiving them, persist in begging for them while they continue to serve and love God with complete disinterest.§ On arriving at

6 *hi Can. Serm.* 9.

† *Life,* chap. 34; St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 26.

§ St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, chap. 20, "He who desires to be visited by Thee, O Lord, must first, like Mary, conceive Thee by an ardent and solicitous de-

some degree of the conforming union, although it may be by the ways which are considered "ordinary," and with a little recollection, they immediately begin to perceive clearly the treasure which they possess and the mysterious transformation which the vivifying Spirit is gradually working in them.® They now know by experience that the God for whom they yearned reposes and reigns in their very hearts. Like faithful sheep of Christ, they hear His voice and follow Him and by means of a superior light they recognize Him and perceive that He gives them eternal life.[9][10] The first thing these vigilant souls hear from Him can be summed up in the blessed words: "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, . . . the flowers have appeared. . . . For thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely."[11]

Although no one should attempt to place himself in that state to which he has not yet been called, much less attempt to fly without wings, yet all souls can and should ask that the gates be opened to them and should beg for wings like the dove—which are the precious gifts of wisdom and understanding—so that they may fly and be at rest. They should be assured that they will be filled with holy desires and that "everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."[12]

sire and later give birth to Thee through perseverance in good. Whoever desires to be raised to the summit of union with 'I hee must have a faith so strong that in a certain way it ceases to be faith and becomes certitude. . . . When the soul arrives at complete forgetfulness of self, it is admitted to the divine union and confirmed in faith." See also St. Bernard, *Serm. 32 in Cant.;* Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 33; Blessed Henry Suso, *Spiritual Discipline,* II; *Imitation of Christ,* I, chap. 11; II, chap. 1; Blosius, *Inst, spir.,* chaps. 5 and 12; Bartholomew of the Martyrs, *Comp, myst.,* chaps. 26, 27; St. Teresa, IF.ty *of Perfection,* chaps. 17, 19-21; *Interior Castle,* second mansions, chap. 1; third mansions, chap. 1; fifth mansions, chaps, i, 2, 7; St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II, chap. 15; *Dark Night,* I, chap. 1; *Living Flame,* canticle 3; Gratian, *Itiner.,* chaps. I, 9; Surin, *Catéchisme,* I, chap. 1; II, chap. 2; Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* II, chap, ii; Molina, *De la Oraciôn,* 11, chap. 6; Arintero, *Cuestiones Misticas,* I, chap. 4.

9 St. Bernard, *Serm. 71 in Cant.:* "The soul should not glory in itself at being perfectly united with God as long as it does not feel that He dwells within it and it in Him." Tauler *(Institutions,* chap. 27) says that in order for a good man to become better, that is, to become spiritual and interior, three things are required: 1. purity of heart, which leaves the heart free of every earthly image or likeness; 2. liberty of spirit; and 3. to feel one's union with God. Father Juan de los Angeles makes the same statement in his *Dialogos* (IX, 7).

10 John 10:14-28.

11 Cant. 2:10-14.

12Matt. 7:8. "Oh, how timid we are," says Ven. Rocaberti, "about desiring celestial things, of which the Holy Ghost says, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will

Then when they begin to feel the soft breathing of the Spirit, the motion of those mystical wings, and the splendor of a still more subtle light which gives a new luster and beauty to the things of faith, they will be, though they may not realize it, fully in the mystical state. See Saudreau, *L'Etat mystique,* p. 218.

By the very fact that this state is of such great worth and that we are unable to attain it by our own efforts, we should beg for it with great insistence, saying with the Samaritan woman, "Lord, give me to drink of this water." [13] St. Teresa, in spite of a certain reticence and ambiguous phrases (undoubtedly, in order not to conflict with a contrary opinion which was then beginning to be in vogue), never tires of insinuating and emphasizing how desirable is this good and how, by means of humility and perseverance, it is ultimately attained.[14] She herself never ceased from her earliest years to beg for that mysterious living water for which she found

fill it' (Ps. 80:11); that is, 'Faithful soul, open the mouth of holy desire, and I thy Lord will fill it with grace and glory.' In another place (Ps. 102:5) the Psalmist adds that, if we truly desire spiritual goods, we shall be renewed like the eagle: 'Who satisfied! thy desire with good things: thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.' "

[13] "For if thou shalt call for wisdom, and incline thy heart to prudence; if thou shalt seek her as money, and shalt dig for her as for a treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and shalt find the knowledge of God. Because the Lord giveth wisdom, and out of His mouth cometh prudence and knowledge" (Prov. 2:3-6). "They that in the morning early watch for me, shall find me" *(ibid.,* 8:17).

"My son, from thy youth up receive instruction, and even to thy gray hairs thou shalt find wisdom. . . . For the wisdom of doctrine is according to her name, and she is not manifest unto many, but with them to whom she is known, she continued! even to the sight of God. . . . Search for her, and she shall be made known to thee. . . . Let thy thoughts be upon the precepts of God . . . and He will give thee a heart, and the desire of wisdom shall be given to thee" (Ecclus. 6:18-37, *passim).*

"Think of the Lord in goodness, and seek Him in simplicity of heart. For He is found by them that tempt Him not, and He showeth Himself to them that have faith in Him" (Wisd. i:if.).

[14] *Interior Castle,* fifth mansions, chap. 1: "There are really very few who do not enter these Mansions that I am about to describe. Some get farther than others; but, as I say, the majority manage to get inside. . . . Though all of us who wear this sacred habit of Carmel are called to prayer and contemplation . . . few of us prepare ourselves for the Lord to reveal it to us. . . . So let us pause here, my sisters, and beg the Lord that, since to some extent it is possible for us to enjoy Heaven upon earth, He will grant us His help so that it will not be our fault if we miss anything; may He also show us the road and give strength to our souls so that we may dig until we find this hidden treasure.

"Although this work is performed by the Lord," she continues (chap. 2), "and we can do nothing to make His Majesty grant us this favour, we can do a great deal to prepare ourselves for it. . . . Here, then, daughters, you see what we can do, with God's favour. May His Majesty Himself be our Mansion as He is in this Prayer of Union which, as it were, we ourselves spin."

herself to thirst so greatly.[15] And this living water is nothing other than the life of the Spirit.[16] If it is not asked for ardently, that is only because it is not known or appreciated. "If thou didst know the gift of God . . . thou perhaps would have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water . . . springing up into life everlasting." [17]

To this water He invites all those who thirst after justice, and it is offered freely, together with the milk of His consolations.[18] To all of us He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. . . . If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?" [18] "Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full." [20] What is this but to encourage all of us, as He did the apostles, to ask unceasingly to be filled with the consoling Spirit in order to be enriched with His most precious gifts? [21]

16 See *Life,* chap. 30.

16 John 7:39.

17 John 4:10-14, *passim.*

18 " 'All you that thirst, come to the waters; and you that have no money make haste, buy and eat. Come ye, buy wine and milk without money, and without any price' (Isa. 55:1). He first says water and then wine and milk. Water, because it quenches thirst and cools the heat of the body and refreshes the weary members and cleanses them from all stain. Wine, because it makes you lose your own sense and take on the sense of Christ. Put away your own pleasure and will and accept the pleasure and will and desire of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. Who desires to receive that which is given away freely? . . . He speaks also of milk for thus does the Holy Ghost offer to the soul that which He possesses, like a child at the mother's breast, and He guides, governs, and enriches the soul like a child. Thus is He our governor, our defender, and the instructor of our youth. . . . Who desires this and yet is living in sin? Who would ask for this while his heart is occupied with other things? . . . Ah, Lord, what is this . . . that Thou dost freely give and which costs us nothing?" (Blessed John of Avila, *Tratado del Espiritu Santo,* 4.)

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God, V, 2:* "The milk, which is the food of love, represents mystical knowledge; I mean the sweet gift which comes from a loving complacence in the perfections of the divine goodness. . . . It has its origin in celestial Love who prepares it for His children even before they have thought of it. It has a sweet and pleasant taste . . . and it confers a joy without deviation; it intoxicates without enervating; it does not take away sense, but it elevates it."

18 Matt. 7:7, it; Luke 11:9-13.

20 John 16:24.

21 St. Augustine, *Soliloquies,* chap. 1: "Disclose Thyself to me, O my Consoler; grant that I may see Thee, O Light of my eyes. Come, joy of my spirit; let me see Thee, delight of my heart; grant that I may love Thee, life of my soul. . . . Let me embrace Thee, heavenly Spouse and my complete joy. . . . Give me the sight whereby I may see Thee, O invisible light. Create in me a new sense of smell, O perfume of life, that will draw me to Thee, borne along by the fragrance of Thy

Is the saying: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink," [22] not directed to all souls? [23] He offers His rest to all those who take up His yoke.[24] The divine Spouse is continually calling all souls and He is desirous of celebrating with them the banquet of the mystical nuptials.[25] If we do not cooperate with Him or if we make ourselves deaf to His invitations, the fault is ours.[26] But the divine Wisdom never ceases to invite the little ones and to say to those who do not understand: "Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you. Forsake childishness, and live, and walk by the ways of prudence." [27] This is that mystical wisdom, so lovable and desirable, which "is easily seen by them that love her,

sweet aroma. Give me a healthy taste by which I may know Thee and discern how great, O Lord, is the sum of Thy sweetness which Thou hast reserved for those who are filled with Thy charity. . . . O Life which givest life to me; vital life, sweet and lovable and deserving to be ever in the memory! Where art Thou? Where shall I find Thee, so that I may die to myself and live in Thee? . . . With great longing does my soul desire Thee. . . . I perceive Thy sweet odor and by this do I live and find my joy, but as yet I do not see Thee. I hear Thy voice and I regain life. But why dost Thou hide Thy presence from me? . . . Wherever there is a soul that does not love Thee, it is because it does not know Thee, and it does not know Thee because it does not contemplate Thee. . . . He who knows Thee, loves Thee, forgets self and is entirely absorbed in Thee to find his joy in Thee."

22 John 7:37.

23 St. Teresa, *Way of Perfection,* chaps. 19 f.: "Why do you suppose, daughters, that I have tried, as people say, to describe the end of the battle before it has begun and to point to its reward by telling you about the blessing which comes from drinking of the heavenly source of this living water? I have done this so that you may not be distressed at the trials and annoyances of the road. . . . Remember, the Lord invites us all. . . . He might have said: 'Come, all of you, for after all you will lose nothing by coming; and I will give drink to those whom I think fit for it.' But, as He said we were all to come, without making this condition, I feel sure that none will fail to receive this living water unless they cannot keep to the path. . . . His mercy is so great that He has forbidden none to strive to come and drink of this fountain of life."

24 Matt. 11:28 f.

25 Apoc. 3:20.

26 St. Bernard, *Semi. 2, Dont. I post Oct. Epipb.;* "We have all been called to these spiritual nuptials in which Jesus Christ is the Spouse, and the bride is ourselves." But the same saint observes *(Semi. 32 in Cant.).* "The kisses and caresses of the Spouse will be enjoyed only by the soul that seeks the Spouse by means of many vigils and pravers, much labor and storms of tears. . . . Be thou steadfast in thy weepings, awaiting His return with certainty."

27 Prov. 9:4-6. St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* Bk. VIII, chap. 3: "How can there be more clearly demonstrated the cordial desire that one's friend eat well than by preparing for him a splendid banquet as did the king in the Gospel parable and then, after inviting his friend, to insist and almost force him by coaxing, exhortations, and pleas that he should come and sit at the table and eat? . . . This kind of beneficence, however, is offered by means of invitations, urgings, and pleading, without any force or violence."

and is found by them that seek her. She preventeth them that covet her . . . preferred before kingdoms and thrones and riches esteemed as nothing in comparison of her . . . for all good things come together with her." We must ever love and seek this wisdom in order to have it as our spouse and thereby communicate intimately with God.[28]

If, then, we truly desire it, an understanding of the divine will be given us and, if we seek it with fervor, the Spirit of wisdom will come upon us (Wisd. 7:7).

Wisdom itself says that it finds its delight in dwelling with the sons of men; that it loves those who love it and will be found by all those who rise early to search for it; that all those who find it will find life, and with it salvation and justice, glory, riches, and happiness. So it is that it directs itself even to those who do not understand it or who make themselves deaf to it, so that all may come to it and hear it and be intoxicated with its sweetness.[29] All are able to be allured and taught by God Himself,[30] for to those who are faithful to grace, He teaches all things through the unction of the Spirit.[31]

The Apostle begs for all the faithful, and not only for the privileged few "the spirit of wisdom and of revelation, in the knowledge of Him . . . that you may know what rhe hope is of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." [32] In this possession of the loving Spirit and being possessed by Him consists true contemplation to which all arrive who drink at the fountain of living water.

If many souls are slow in arriving or never arrive at all, that is because they presume too much on themselves and do not hasten in search of so great a good. Some do not seek it with enough humility and perseverance or do not open the door when the Beloved knocks; others because they do not follow after His sweet aroma and beg Him to draw them or because, instead of asking Him to send them His Spirit, they do not even stop to hear His voice and they deafen themselves to His repeated callings.[33]

[28] Wisd. 6:13 f.; 7:8, 11; 8:2 f.
[29] Prov. 8:17-21, 31-36; 9:3-6; Cant. 5:1.
[30] Osee 2:14; Isa. 54:13; John 6:45.
[31] 1 John 2:20-27.
[32] Eph. 1:17 f.
[33] *Imitation of Christ,* Bk. III, chap. 3: "I have instructed prophets from the be-

"Today if you shall hear his voice," says the Psalmist, "harden not your hearts" 34 so that it will not happen to you as it did to those who were unable to enter into the divine rest. Every day, as the Apostle tells us,35 God invites us to enter into that rest. For us has that Sabbath day (day of rest) been prepared. "Let us hasten, therefore, to enter into that rest; lest any man fall into the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword, and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit."

But in order to hear the divine voice, and above all, to enjoy the vision and loving conversation of the God of all consolation,38 much recollection and great purity of heart are required.37 Therefore the dissolute, the enemies of solitude, those who spend themselves excessively on exterior works, however holy those works may be, since they do not take sufficient care to walk in the divine presence and to purify their souls, are usually opposed to the mystical life. The same is true of all those who are more interested in purely theoretical speculations, in speaking with great ostentation, and in working amid the clamor of the world, rather than feeling and experiencing the things of God in silence.38 This is a secret wisdom

ginning, says the Lord, but even now I do not cease to speak to all. But many are deaf to My voice and are obdurate."

84 Ps. 94:8-11.

88 Heb. 3:13 f.; 4:1–12.

86 John 14:17-21.

87 Matt. 5:8, Cassian, *Collât.,* X, chap. 6: "The soul is elevated in prayer according to the degree of its purity. The more it alienates itself from earthly and material things, the more is it purified and the more does it interiorly see Jesus Christ in the lowliness of His life and the majesty of His glory. The contemplation of God by means of a most pure vision is given only to those who withdraw themselves from base and worldly thoughts and works, to ascend with Him to the lofty mountain of solitude where, freed from the tumults of the passions and the slavery of vices, they contemplate in the light of faith and the summit of virtue the glory and beauty of the divine face which only the pure of heart merit to see."

88Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 25: "The principal reason why so few arrive at this state is that they do not persevere in seeking it and they put forth such little effort in the elimination of vices, in the attainment of purity of heart, and in being always united with God. . . . We pour ourselves forth through the senses," he says in chapter 3, "we are slothful and lukewarm in prayer, we do not direct our ardent desires and aspirations to God, we do not foster an interior stability, nor do we strive, by means of abnegation, to correspond with the divine inspirations. We do not advert with a lively attention to the presence of God and, because our mind departs from that simple light which is within us, we spend ourselves on other things. For that reason we are not illumined nor do we arrive at self-knowledge. Within we are variable and inconstant; without we are insatiable for things of the senses."

which is revealed only to the little ones who live in obscurity and it is hidden from the wise and prudent of the world.[39]

But those who, because of their state in life, are continually occupied with works for God and, overwhelmed with occupations, scarcely find the time to be recollected, can truly advance in Christian perfection and arrive at a certain conforming union by the practice of good works, the exercise of the virtues which their profession requires, the ever indispensable prayer, even though it is vocal, and the practice of the presence of God. Then as soon as they are released from the excessive external activity which absorbed their time, if they begin to be truly recollected in order to restore the forces of their soul, they will find, almost suddenly,

St. Augustine, *Solil.,* chap. 30: "When the soul desires any exterior thing, that is a sign that it does not possess Thee in its interior, for having Thee, it would desire nothing else. . . . But when it desires any creature it suffers a continual hunger because, although it gains what it desires, it still remains empty, for nothing outside of Thee can fill it."

Blessed Henry Suso, *Disc, espir.,* II: "It is not sufficient to study, speculate, and write about the sublime virtues. . . . Those who content themselves with merely knowing these things are like boasting soldiers. They should pass from words to works. Thy should trample underfoot all vain curiosity. They should not spend themselves on external things but should live recollected in God, conquering all their own desires by His love. The Lord once appeared to a pious person who ardently desired to know the will of God and had besought Him with fervent prayers to make it known, and said to her: 'Subdue thy senses; bridle thy mouth; hold thy tongue; control thy heart; and suffer for My sake all annoyances, and in so doing thou wilt do My will perfectly. Renounce the images of visible things and turn thy gaze into thyself to view thy interior and then thou wilt realize how true is the sentence of the prophet: *The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us'* " (Ps. 4:7).

39 Matt. 11:25. *Imitation of Christ,* I, 14; III, 43: "If you lean more upon your own reason than upon the power of Jesus Christ, you will seldom or very late become an illumined man. . . . He to whom I speak, says the Lord, soon becomes wise and greatly advances in spirit. . . . Woe to them who seek many curious things from men and care but little for the manner of serving Me. . . . It is I who raise the humble mind in a short time so that it acquires more understanding of the eternal truth than if it had studied for ten years in schools."

Ven. Bartholomew of the Martyrs, *Comp, myst.,* chap. 15: "If one seeks to know why many theologians do not taste the sweetness of contemplation, I shall answer in one word: they do not enter into it through the door which Paul points out when he says: 'If anyone among you appears wise, let him become stupid so that he may be wise'; that is, let him humble himself, deeming himself ignorant in regard to the divine mystical wisdom. . . . The simple soul knows God better through love and contemplation than does the most learned theologian with his subtle speculation."

This does not mean, however, that true theology should be an impediment to contemplation, as Molinos taught (cf. Denzinger, *Enchiridion, proposit. cond. 64).* Rather, if studied with humility, it is a great help, as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis de Sales point out.

that they will be raised to a very high degree of contemplation. For the Lord desires that even in this life they should reap to some extent the fruits of the labors which they have undertaken in His name and should begin to enjoy the prelude of the glory which awaits them.[40]

Thus, Father Godinez states[41] that this happens to many pious missioners who, fatigued and grown old, have ceased their labors in the apostolic life. St. Teresa also mentions[42] that this occurred "to a holy man and great Dominican professor." Blessed James of Cadiz, in the midst of his continual apostolic labors, his glorious triumphs, and the honor and applause he received, felt nothing but dryness, self-contempt, confusion, and filial fear, in spite of the fact that he was accustomed to spend at least two or three hours in prayer. Actually he was a contemplative without realizing it. Although he was inflamed with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, rarely could he feel or taste, until his last hours, the sweetness of the divine charity which prompted him. In public he shone forth with the gifts of knowledge, counsel, and fortitude and he was frequently inspired by God to say or do in his preaching things far different from what he had planned. But privately, hardly any other gifts were manifested in him save fear and piety. There was fulfilled in him, as in all apostolic men, the *foris pugnae, intus timore* ("combats without, fears within") of which St. Paul speaks.[43] This kept him humble and self-contemptuous before God, ever placing his heart, as he himself said, beneath the feet of sinners, while with invincible fortitude he reprimanded and threatened, struggling for the triumph of goodness and truth.

If, then, these faithful servants do not perceive the sweet voice of their Lord until a very late date, it is because they could not or did not know how to recollect themselves sufficiently to listen to

40 St. Teresa, *Way of Perfection,* chap. 17: "Let us not be discouraged, then, and give up prayer or cease doing what the rest do; for the Lord sometimes tarries long, and gives us as great rewards all at once as He has been giving to others over many years. I myself spent over fourteen years without ever being able to meditate except while reading. There must be many people like this. ... Be sure that, if you do what lies in your power and prepare yourself for high contemplation with the perfection aforementioned . . . He will not fail to [grant it to you] if you have true detachment and humility."

41 *Teol. mist.,* Ill, 6-8.

42 *Life,* chap. 33.

43II Cor. 7:5.

Him and converse with Him in solitude.[44] To be able to know Him intimately, it is necessary to seek His loving companionship: "Be still, and see that I am God."

Mystical knowledge, since it is a knowledge through experience, requires frequent exercise of prayer. Those who devote themselves to this practice but little or those who are not careful always to walk in the divine presence, should not complain at not being called to contemplation. Therefore the great masters of the spiritual life insist on recollection, introspection, perseverance in prayer, and frequent ardent aspirations, in order to rise us up to an intimate association with God and to enjoy the delights of the mystical life.[45]

St. Augustine[46] desires us to seek God within ourselves, assured that we shall find Him. In all his *Meditations* as well as in his *Soliloquies* (chap, i) he never ceases to ask for wings from the Holy Ghost so that by means of contemplation he may fly and find the mystical rest.[47]

44 Origen, *Hom'd. i in Cant.:* "Now let Him no longer speak to me through His prophets, but may He Himself come to me and kiss me with the kiss of His mouth." Ps. 93:12 f.: "Blessed is the man whom Thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach him out of Thy law, that Thou mayest give him rest from the evil days."

45 Blosius, *Inst, spirit.,* chap. 5: "The assiduous use of aspirations and ejaculatory prayers, together with true mortification and abnegation, is a most certain guide which quickly and easily leads to perfection and the mystical divine union. For such aspirations efficaciously penetrate and overcome everything that lies between God and man. Surely the more one is withdrawn from all transitory things and turns His heart entirely to God with humility and love, the more does God turn to Him and infuse new grace in him."

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* XII, 4: "As to the rest, we should observe that the foolish, vain, and superfluous things in which we engage ourselves divert us from the love of God, but not the true and legitimate exercises of our vocation. . . . St. Bernard never lost any opportunity to achieve the increase of this holy love, although he was in the courts and armies of great princes."

46 *Conf.,* I, 2; X, 24-27.

47 St. Augustine, *Meditations,* chap. 37: "Oh fount of life, fill my soul with the flood of Thy delights and intoxicate my heart with the holy inebriation of Thy love. . . . Elevate my soul, which thirsts for Thee, the inexhaustible fountain of life. . . . Thou Thyself didst say: *If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink.* . . . Give me Thy «Holy Spirit who is symbolized by those waters which Thou didst promise to those who thirst. . . . Give me wings like an eagle so that my spirit may fly to Thee and never fall away. . . . Let my heart rest in Thee . . . so that I may find peace and quiet and may be embraced by Thee who art my only good, and when the obscurity of my restless thoughts shall have vanished, let me contemplate Thee clearly, sweet light of my eyes. Gather my soul, O Lord, under the shadow of Thy wings . . . and in that perpetual peace I shall sleep and be at rest. . . . Grant me, I beseech Thee, the wings of contemplation so that with them I can fly to the heights and reach Thee."

Dionysius the mystic, inaccurately called the Areopagite, singularly charges souls to despoil themselves of all sensible forms in order to arrive at lofty contemplation.[48] For God concedes this mystical knowledge to souls that are well disposed and that, desirous of greater perfection, seek it in all humility. Thus is "man raised by prayer to the contemplation of the divine grandeurs." [49]

St. Gregory the Great expresses this same idea in almost the same words, saying: "It is not by visible images and forms that one can obtain the invisible light. He who aspires to receive this contemplative light must be ever vigilant to preserve humility and not to appropriate to himself the graces he receives." [50]

"He who seeks God," observes St. Peter Damian, "does so with the idea of finding rest one day or other and of being submerged in the joy of lofty contemplation." [51]

Richard of St. Victor [52] compares souls longing for God with the cherubim of the propitiatory and says that "in desire we should spread the wings of our heart, awaiting the hour or the moment in which the divine revelation will come, so that as soon as the breath of heavenly inspiration dissipates the clouds of our spirit, we shall break forth in flight, by contemplation, and ascend to the heights whence proceeds the eternal splendor."

"I shall not rest," says St. Bernard,[53] personifying the soul enamored of God, "until He has granted me the kiss of His mouth, which is the sweetness of contemplation of the AVord. I give Him thanks for having permitted me to kiss His feet and then His hands; but if He is mindful of me, He will grant me also the kiss of His mouth. It is not presumption, but love, that moves me to this. Reverence restrains me, but love conquers. Well do I know that it is for Him to invite me, but the force of love impels me to anticipate

48 *Myst. Theol.,* I, i: "Exercise thyself unceasingly in mystical contemplation. Put aside the senses and the operations of the intellect; forget all sensible and intelligible things, those which are and those which are not, and passing above these things, seek to unite thyself as intimately as possible with Him who is beyond every essence and every concept. For by means of this sincere, spontaneous, and total abandonment of thyself and all things, free and without obstacles, thou wilt be introduced to the mysterious splendor of the divine obscurity."

49 *Div. Nom.,* I, a; III, i.

80 *Horn,* j *in Ezech.* II, no. 5.

61 *De perfect, monast.,* chap. 8.

82 *De contempt.,* Bk. VI, chap. 10.

83 *Serm. 9 in Cant.*

the invitation." In *Sermon 32* he adds that the soul which with ardent desires, longings, and tears keeps watch and calls for the divine Spouse, will surely enjoy Him even in this life.[54]

St. Albert the Great dedicates his precious treatise, *De adhaerendo Deo,* to the arousal of the most ardent desires for contemplation and he says that we should not rest until we have attained and enjoyed the preludes of glory so that, once having attached ourselves to the divine goodness, we shall always follow after it. He writes (chap. 7): "Let us recollect our heart and betake ourselves to interior joys, so that some time we may be able to fix it in the light of divine contemplation. . . . It is necessary that with the reverence of humility and with great trust the mind raise itself above self and all created things through the negation of all things. . . . Then is it brought out of the darkness of the mind and raised higher within itself and enters more profoundly into itself. In this way it ascends even to the enigmatic contemplation of the most holy Trinity. . . . Wherefore, never cease, never rest until you taste certain—as I say—pledges or experiences of the future plentitude; until you obtain certain first fruits of the sweetness of the divine savor, do not cease to run after it."

"This ought to be," adds the same saint in chap. 13, "the intention, the effort, and the goal of the spiritual man: to try to possess in this corruptible body the image of his future happiness and to taste in this world the pledge of glory and celestial conversation. Such, I say, is the goal of all perfection. . . . Therefore, if you persevere in your introspection and recollection, it will become easy for you to contemplate and enjoy these tilings."

St. Thomas admits the perfect unity and continuity of the devout and perfect Christian life and therefore he always considers contemplation a state to which all the faithful friends of God ought to aspire.[55] They should dispose themselves for it by means of all the

[54] Interpreting in another place the desires for the Spouse, he asks God to show him His face and to manifest Himself in the fullness of contemplation: "Alas, there is no clear light, no satisfying food, -no safe mansion; therefore show me where Thou dost pasture and where Thou dost recline at midday. . . . Thy face is as the midday. . . . O truly, as the midday, the fullness of heat and light, the halting of the sun, the dissipation of shadows! . . . Show me this place of light and peace and plenitude . . . so that I may merit to contemplate Thee in thy light and beauty through a flight of the mind" *(Semi. 33 in Cant.,* 6-7).

[65] *Contra Gent.,* IV, chap. 22: "In the first place, mutual intercourse would seem to belong to friendship in a very special manner. Now, man's intercourse with

ascetical exercises and gradually ascend from the consideration of the divine wonders to the loving vision of God Himself and the contemplation of divine truth.[58]

St. Bonaventure, in his famous *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum,* teaches the way in which one can attain mystical science and reach the "rest of contemplation." He expressly states that God invites all: "God invites all truly spiritual men to this type of rapture and flight of mind." Therefore "all the faithful ought to aspire to this knowledge of God."[57] [58]

In his opusculum, *De perfectione vitae,* he says: "Completely forget everything external and strive with all the fervor of your soul to rise above self without ever falling away, rising with such ardent devotion that you will be able to enter into the marvelous tabernacle where, through contemplating the Beloved and finding your joy in Him, you will be enraptured and transformed in Him." Thus do we see that "mental prayer," as Blessed Angela of Foligno says (chap. 62), "carries one to the supernatural." All those who try to pray and meditate as they ought will become contemplatives.

God invites all, as St. Catherine of Siena teaches.[58] She never

God consists in contemplating Him: thus the Apostle says (Phil. 3:20): *Our conversation is in heaven.* Since, then, the Holy Ghost makes us to be lovers of God, it follows that by Him we are made contemplators of God."

[50] Ila Ilae, q.180, a.3: "Man arrives at the perception of a simple truth by a process from several premises. Accordingly, then, the contemplative life has one act wherein it is finally completed, namely the contemplation of truth, and from this act it derives its unity. Yet it has many acts whereby it arrives at this final act."

These preparatory acts whereby the soul disposes itself for contemplation include meditation, spiritual reading, and the like. See *ibid.,* ad 2 and ad 4.

St. Thomas adds that even those souls who are very much inclined to the active life can dispose themselves for contemplation by the faithful exercise of the virtues: "Those who are more adapted to the active life can prepare themselves for the contemplative by the practice of the active life; while none the less, those who are more adapted to the contemplative life can take upon themselves the works of the active life, so as to become yet more apt for contemplation" (Ila Ilae, q.182, a.4, ad 3). Cf. also *ibid.,* a.4, ad 2 and ad 3 where St. Thomas points out the various steps by which, through the consideration of created things, one can arrive at the sublime contemplation of divine truth.

All of this is in accordance with what Isaias says (58:10): "When thou shalt pour out thy soul to the hungry, and shalt satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noonday." The passage is more properly applied to the works of charity which contemplative souls ought sometimes to perform in the midst of their prolonged obscurities in order to strive thus to regain the light.

[57] *In Sent.,* dist. 73, q. 3, a.2, ad 6.

[58] *Dialogues,* chap. 53. See also chaps. 59, 85, tot.

wearies of exhorting all types of souls not to be deaf or lazy or cowardly but to seek to receive "the bath of fire and blood" and to submerge themselves and be intoxicated with the blood of Christ.[59]

Blessed Henry Suso dedicates his precious book, *Eternal Wisdom*, to the arousing of hearts with the love and desire for that Wisdom, and in *Divine Union* he seeks to achieve that union with all zeal.[80]

In his famous sermon on the text, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him," [81] Tauler shows how these words are addressed to all the faithful, although very few make themselves worthy to hear them and dispose themselves in a fitting manner to go in search of the Spouse. By the practice of the interior life, he says in his *Divine Institutions* (chap. 27), "the soul feels the union of its spirit with God. . . . In this union the soul is again impelled to new longings and urged to interior conversation. Now loving, now working, it rises to a new union with God. Thus the work, the union, and the growth in God are renewed and this renovation is the spiritual life." "If anyone should ask," he adds in chapter 28, "how to attain that deiform life more easily and more fully and to become one spirit with God, I shall tell him that it is by learning to be a diligent dweller in himself, recollected in himself by a continual introspection. For there one truly experiences the shining forth of the light; there one hears the inspirations, motions, and promptings of the Holy Ghost which man should follow with diligence, for this divine Spirit unceasingly attracts, prompts, and

[79] *Letters*, 52, 57, 58, 60, 106; *Dialogues*, chaps. 60-63, 56, 73-79, 85 f.

[80] *Divine Union*, I, II, VII: "Depart from corporal things and by means of thy higher faculties, rush toward the heights of contemplation where our perfection is found. Do you not see that the active life is a desert which leads to the land of promise . . . to that purity and peace which are the prelude to glory? . . . Apply yourself to the study of the interior life which consists in perfect abandonment and annihilation of self in God and a very close union of the soul with the divine essence. . . . Persevere valiantly in this abandonment and do not rest until you arrive, so far as human weakness will allow, to the perfect union of the saints, which union is always present, actual, and divine. . . . This sublime union with God is for you an obligation, because of the principle on whom you depend. . . . The supreme Spirit elevates man and illumines him with a divine light in order that he may turn to his God. But most men, disdaining this light, degenerate the dignity of their soul and obscure the divine likeness by busying themselves with the sinful pleasures of the world. . . . The discreet and prudent, on the other hand, following the brilliant and divine star, attach themselves to what is stable and, renouncing the pleasures of the senses and all perishable things, unite themselves with ardor to the eternal Truth."

[61] Matt. 25:6.

urges His own. This is not understood by the exterior man. . . . But the interior man realizes it keenly because, feeling God within himself and living continually with Him, he will give way so that God can carry His work to perfection. God's place is nothing other than our interior, for the kingdom of God is within us.[62] He who refuses to go where the treasure is has no reason to complain about being poor. . . . He who is desirous of finding all truth should look within himself, ever opening the center of his soul to God through loving aspirations and tender sighs, coupled with humble resignation."

Ruysbroeck [63] affirms that when a soul experiences ardent desires to see Christ, its Spouse, and to know Him as He is, climbing with Zacheus to the top of the tree of faith, it will see Him pass by with all His gifts and will hear from His mouth the most adorable secrets and will feel Him dwell in its heart.

"Jesus Christ," observes J. Lansperge, "is saying to the soul: My daughter, listen to My voice in every time and place, which repeats to thee that thou shouldst enter into thyself. Here is the mystical theology which My Father hath hidden from the wise of the world to reveal it to the little ones. I, as the supreme doctor, make it penetrate their hearts when they are separated from the world, from themselves, and from all creatures. Call without ceasing, My daughter, longing to attain it; desire it with a profound humility, and in peace and silence wait for it with longsuffering and confidence." [84]

Blosius begins his *Institutio spiritualis* by saying that "all ought to aspire to perfection and the mystical union. . . . He who attains this union will find and feel within himself Him whose sweet presence will lavish goods upon the soul and fill it with ineffable joys. By this union also he will avoid pouring himself forth exteriorly, seeking the deceitful consolations of creatures and he will deem insipid and bitter everything that is not God. . . . He who earnestly longs for it, desiring to be perfect and to experience the intimate embrace of the divine union, should insist on the mortification and abnegation of self and should practice holy introspection, sighing for God by ejaculations and pious desires and doing for

62 Luke 17:21.
63 *Ornato de las bodas,* Bk. I, chap. *16.*
84 *Alloquiorum,* I, 16.

Him whatever he does, desirous of nothing other than pleasing Him in all things. This and no other is the way by which he can attain perfection and the mystical union." 65

Ven. Bartholomew of the Martyrs repeatedly insists on this same doctrine and, using abundant testimony from the Fathers, tries to induce souls to dispose themselves for contemplation by means of frequent introspections.66 He declares that all souls could attain it if they would seek it in solitude with bitter sorrow and firm perseverance.67 By these means the soul will most certainly reach it: "He (William) assigns three steps by which you will most surely ascend to contemplation; first, bitter contrition; second, solitude; third, strong and constant perseverance." 68

Also in conformity with this the most prudent St. Teresa never tires of arousing and recommending the desire for contemplation, taking care that her daughters will dispose themselves to attain it.69

In 1548, St. Ignatius wrote to St. Francis Borgia, advising him to aspire to the gifts of contemplation, not to find complacence in them, but that all his actions might be more perfect.

"Souls practiced in virtue," observes Alvarez de Paz, "can ardently desire contemplation and ask for it with humility, for it is useful for them and a most efficacious means of arriving at perfec-

65 Blosius also proposed many devout prayers to be used in seeking perfection and mystical union. The following is an example: "Through Thy blessed wounds lead me to the very naked essence of my soul and transfer to Thyself, my God, the source of my being, so that I may feel within me the stream of living waters, that I may know Thee clearly, that I may ardently desire Thee, that I may be united to Thee without any medium, and in peaceful fruition rest in Thee for the glory of Thy name. . . . Thee alone ought I desire and Thee alone do I desire and long for. Ah, draw me after Thee. . . . Open to me when I knock; open to the orphan who calls upon Thee. Submerge me in the abyss of Thy divinity and absorb me entirely. Make of us one spirit so that Thou mayest find delight in me."

66 In the tenth chapter of his *Compendium mysticae doctrinae* he says that his works are directed to "inflame souls with the desire for true contemplation and to show how they should travel toward it." Chapter 13 is entitled: *Quaedam media perveniendi ad hanc mysticam theologiam.*

67 *Op. cit.,* chap. 26: "You must labor for a long time to arrive at this happy state. . . . But persevere and trust in God, and your hope will not be in vain."

68 *Ibid.,* chap. 15. "Therefore, let us walk along this way. The pure soul visits God with pure devotion. By visiting Him, it will taste Him; by tasting Him, it will prove how sweet is the Lord by whom it is intoxicated with love. It will turn all its consideration on Him, it will pursue all its desires in Him, it will possess in this life nothing sweeter, nothing more joyful, than to be silent and see that He is God. Thus the soul most intimately embraces the Spouse; it captivates and holds Him, saying: 'I hold Him and I shall not let Him go'" (Cant. 3).

69 *Way of Perfection,* chaps. 17, 19-21.

don. . . . If, then, you feel yourself impelled by divine love and have tried to dispose yourself as far as human frailty will permit, by day and by night pour forth floods of tears to attain that gift. . . . Do not be held back by your own nothingness. . . . Be courageous and say to the Lord: 'If I have found grace before Thee, show me Thy face.' "[70]

"Without contemplation," says Lallemant, "We shall never make much progress in virtue, and shall never be fitted to make others advance therein. We shall never entirely rid ourselves of our weaknesses and imperfections. We shall remain always bound to earth, and shall never rise much above mere natural feelings. We shall never be able to render to God a perfect service. But with it, we shall effect more, both for ourselves and for others, in a month, than without it we should accomplish in ten years." [71]

Father Surin affirms explicitly[72] that contemplation is the mode of prayer proper to perfect souls, although sometimes, through a singular grace, it is granted to souls that are not yet perfect. From this follows the necessity for all to desire contemplation and dispose themselves to receive it, since without it they cannot know themselves well, much less know God and love and serve Him perfectly.[73]

Therefore, Ven. Palaphox published his *Varôn de deseos,* hoping to instill these desires in all the faithful of his diocese so that they might be encouraged in their march along the path of good and valiantly run along the three ways of Christian perfection, rising

[70] *De natura contemplationis,* Bk. V, Part II, chap. 13.

[71] *Spiritual Doctrine,* Prin. VII, chap. 4, art. 4.

[72] *Catecb. Spir.,* Part I, chap. 1.

[73] *Ibid..,* Part II, chap. 2: "As long as a soul does not reach the state of contemplation, it will not be sufficiently humbled before God nor illumined in the spiritual life. Therefore, as soon as a soul is well practiced in holy meditations and pious readings and has acquired sufficient instruction in the things of God, it ought to proceed to dispose itself for that blessed contemplation which, although it cannot be taught by precepts nor acquired by our own industry, can, nevertheless, be rather easily attained by those who know how to avoid the many obstacles which they encounter from the beginning. Among these obstacles is that of stubbornly persisting in discursive meditation and confiding too much in this intellectual work. . . . He who perseveres will be introduced by our Lord into that sweet contemplation which is His wine cellar, a cellar which is obscure in appearance because of the universality and indistinctness of the object—like the cloud into which Moses entered—but which is in reality luminous, for it is the portal to the secrets of God. But its light is not perceived as long as the reason is still darkened."

from virtue to virtue until they could see God in the peaks of contemplation.[74]

Contemplation, Father Molina assures us, "is denied to no one who perseveres in doing all that falls to his share." [75] Therefore "holy contemplation," as St. Francis de Sales teaches, "is the goal and object to which all other exercises tend—spiritual reading, meditation, prayers, and devotions—and they are all conducive to contemplation." [76] For that reason Saudreau adverts that "it is the normal terminus at which all the truly faithful arrived." [77] For, as Father Surin says,[78] all those who use the necessary diligence to mortify and purify themselves, possess God within themselves who fills their potencies and they find that they are enriched with His ineffable gifts in order to live a divine life.

From all this it is seen how that marvelous contemplation, which is a supernatural gift that we could never acquire by our own industry, is not only desirable, but attainable. We not only can but should ask for it and strive for it, disposing ourselves so far as lies on our part so that we will actually receive it and not impede it. It is the complement or fulfillment of the spiritual life and an indispensable means for arriving at true perfection. Therefore God will not refuse it but sooner or later I Ic will happily grant it to all who seek it with the proper dispositions. As Father Joseph of the Holy Ghost argued so well,[79] contemplation is an act of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are infused in us as habits together with grace. Therefore we can and ought to desire the act of a habit which has been given to us for our spiritual advancement. If it remains in the state of a pure habit and is never translated into acts, it will be a useless gift that will profit us nothing. We should, then, dispose ourselves to make this habit fructify into acts which are

74 *Varôn de deseos,* Introd.: "Desires make sinners good; the good, perfect; and the perfect, saints. . . . In the first instance the soul is considered penitent; in the second, devout; and in the third, beloved. In the first instance the soul weeps; in the second, it desires; in the third, it sighs. . . . It contemplates what it has found. . . . The first way is that of beginners; the second is that of the proficient; and the third is that of the perfect. . . . They are the three grades of St. Bonaventure: In the first . . . the soul follows after the divine Spirit; in the second, the soul lives with the divine Spirit; and in the third, the divine Spirit alone lives in the soul."

75 *De la oraciôn,* trat. a, chap. 6.

76 *Love of God,* Bk. VI, chap. 6.

77 *Etat myst.,* p. 185.

78 *Fundaments de la vie spirit.,* Bk. V, chap. 14.

79 *Cursus theol. myst.,* trat. II, disp. it, no. 28.

the true exercises of infused contemplation.

The gifts which God deposits in us tend of themselves to fructify. If they do not do so and if they are not even developed, it is because, instead of cultivating and fostering them, we extinguish them. If, therefore, many "devout" persons never reach the mystical state it is because they do not sufficiently do violence to self in order to cease resisting and saddening the Holy Ghost. If they would not resist Him and would be docile to Him, it is certain that they would find rest for their souls. "This gift of prayer," as St. Francis de Sales teaches, "is freely granted to all those who in their hearts comply with the divine inspirations." [80]

So one should seldom speak of "ordinary" and "extraordinary" ways, but only of that which the Apostle speaks of: carnal men, or little ones in Christ who do not yet know how to appreciate the things that are from above, and of spiritual, adult, or perfect men who, filled with God, experience the works of His Spirit. These men, although they are few, are not extraordinary devout souls, but the only ones who are truly devout Christians and the ordinary faithful followers of Christ.[81]

"If the gift of prayer is so rare," observes Father Grou, "it should not surprise us, for it is reserved for souls who are entirely of God. It is true that He anticipates some souls with this grace, but He does so that they may the better abandon themselves to Him. If they do not do that, He quickly withdraws it from them. It can be established as a certain rule that every soul completely abandoned to God is favored with the gift of prayer, although for the soul's own good God may sometimes choose to ignore it. It is equally certain that the soul which is not totally of God does not have this gift, or that it will not enjoy the gift very long, or that its prayer is an illusion. This is why total abandonment is the touchstone of true prayer." [82]

Asceticism and Mysticism

From what we have said one can deduce that the ascetical life ought always to be ordained and is of itself ordained to the fullness and splendor of the mystical life as to its terminus, completion, and

[80] *Op. cit.,* Bk. Ill, chap. 4.
[81] See Rom. 8:5; I Cor. 2:14-15; 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14.
[82] *Le don de soi-même à Dieu,* χχïü.

crown. Even in its strictest signification or most characteristic state the mystical life is undoubtedly nothing but the complete manifestation of the Christian life or, rather, the development of the graces received in baptism. Taken in its widest sense, it embraces the whole supernatural life and in this sense it can hardly be distinguished from the ascetical life except by reason of the latter's imperfect and limited mode which is common in the first phases of the divine life of grace. The ascetical and mystical life are so closely related, so compenetrated and even identified, that a person passes from one to the other by unconscious steps. As a result we can sometimes hardly know what pertains to the one and what is proper to the other. Even as respective sciences, granted that they can be distinguished in the absolute, they arc in reality more or less blended, so that mystical theology penetrates the whole of ascetical theology, for the simple reason that they do not study distinct objects but one and the same object: the true Christian life, however much they may study it in a different manner or in its different phases. At most, they can be distinguished basically as different branches of the same science.[83]

Asceticism, as it is understood today, is a simple preparation for the mystical life. Actually the good ascetic should at least be in the state of grace and possess the sincere desire to dominate his evil inclinations and acquire the Christian virtues in order to travel along the path to perfection. Being in the state of grace and aspiring to perfection, he already securely possesses, at least in germ, all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These gifts are not given to be kept inactive, but to be exercised, perfected, and developed so that they can manifest their proper fruits: acts of heroic Christian virtue performed in a superhuman manner. All the acts which the ascetic thus produces, although incipiently, are true mystical acts because

83 According to Ribct *(Myst.,* I, 15), mystical theology treats of the most lofty grades of the spiritual life, whereas ascetical theology treats exclusively of the practices of the first and second ways. "In this sense," observes Father Weiss *(Apologie,* IX, conf. 4, 4, footnote), "the distinction is well justified." But he adds, "there is no reason to depart from the great ancient theologians according to whom mystical theology is the teaching, in general, of all the exercises which constitute the spiritual life, and ascetical theology is that part of mystical theology whose practices are especially directed to the beginners and the proficients." See also Antonius a Spiritu S., *Direct, myst.,* I, no. 31; Philippus a S. Trim, *Theol. myst. prolegom.;* Schram, *Theol. myst.,* sect. 2; Saudrcau, *Les degrés de la vie spir.,* p. 26. The work of Alvarez de Paz, the most complete work of the spiritual life which has ever been published, was written in accordance with the principle stated above.

"the mystical act is nothing but an act realized through the gifts of the Holy Ghost. If these acts are multiplied and made frequent, we can say that the soul then finds itself in the mystical state." 84

Therefore, no treatise on asceticism would be complete without taking into account the mystical element. These two elements are mutually blended, and the two sciences are inseparable, as are the respective *ways* or manners of life.85

Hence all souls in the state of grace, possessing as they do the gifts of the Holy Ghost, although they must perhaps exercise them for many years and always with greater fervor in the ordinary practices of asceticism, already possess in themselves the seeds and rudiments of the mystical life and can develop and manifest them little by little. It is proper to this mystical life, as all admit, to have a mode of prayer which we cannot obtain by our own efforts, even aided by ordinary grace, because it is produced by the Spirit who breathes where and when He will and for that reason it is frequently experienced when the soul least expects it or least strives for it. It is also undeniable that this prayer can exist and sometimes does exist at the very dawn of the ascetical life and is experienced to a certain degree in the sensible fervors which usually abound in beginners but which are had when they are received, and not when the soul strives for them or desires them. One should recognize in such fervors a special motion of the consoling Spirit who thus renews the face of our hearts.86 And if that motion or singular presence of the loving Paraclete is not felt in itself, it can be perceived and easily recognized by its special fruits and good effects.87

84 Boulesteix, "La définition de la mystique," *Revue Augustinienne,* November, 1906.

85 In Ia, q. i, a.3, St. Thomas shows how all sacred doctrine constitutes specifically one science.

86 Almost all fervent souls sometimes suddenly experience, and when they least expect it, either a vital presence of God or a loving and strong call to solitude. This invitation comes with such vividness that they cannot doubt that it is God Himself who is calling them and that they would be very culpable if they were deaf to it. At the same time they usually experience a lively impulse to ask for certain favors, with full certainty of obtaining them and actually they receive all that they ask under that movement, full of fervor and filial confidence. All these things are promptings of the spirit of piety or fear, of counsel, of knowledge or wisdom, and can be perceived even in the midst of a most active or "ordinary" life, from the very beginning of conversion.

87 Blessed Juan de Avila, *Tratado 4 del Espiritu Santo:* "Does it never happen to you that your soul is dry, without any moisture, filled with dismay, afflicted, and insipid so that no good thing seems appealing? Then, while in that stare of discontent and sometimes in a condition of great listlessness, there comes a holy breeze

Therefore the true ascetic, even the lowliest Christian, who takes seriously the *unum necessarium,* which is the work of sanctification, and strives as he ought to despoil himself of self and to be clothed in Jesus Christ and mortify himself so as not to resist the Spirit of adoption who inspires and vivifies him, will frequently work under the divine impulses although he will not clearly advert to it. By dint of following these impulses, sooner or later he will be able to experience them clearly and to distinguish them. He will have an ever keener awareness of them until finally he lets himself be moved almost habitually and without resistance by that sweet Consoler whose divine breathing will produce remarkable harmony in him. Whenever he is moved in virtue of these impulses, he will work mystically, he will perform a mystical act, even when he did not foresee it or is even now not aware of it. When he feels and is aware of feeling, although perhaps in a vague and confused manner, the special influence of the vivifying Spirit, which incapacitates him to proceed in his prayers according to his accustomed manner and makes him use another new form, then we can truly say that he lives in the mystical state, however much he may neither intend nor desire to walk along "extraordinary ways."

Asceticism is principally ordained to the purification of the soul and the acquisition and practice of the more indispensable virtues. The ascetic exercises himself in the avoidance of evil and the practice of good, taking as his motto: *Recede a malo et fac bonum.*[33] Persevering in that exercise, he "seeks after peace and pursues it." [89]

. . . which gives you life, strengthens you, animates you, and makes you turn to yourself. It gives you new desires and ardent love, many great and holy satisfactions, and makes you speak words and perform works that surprise you. That is the Holy Ghost, the Consoler, and when He breathes upon you (and He does breathe upon our souls) and when He comes upon you (as He certainly does come to souls), you find yourself as if touched by a magnet, with new energies and works and words and desires which formerly you would not have found in anything. Formerly everything hindered and irritated you; but now you find savor and contentment in everything, you rejoice in all things, and everything teaches you. . . . If you but had permission to speak, you would say marvelous and great things about what the Lord of all creation has given you to know."

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* VI, 7: "Just as when we place a magnet among many needles, they all turn their points and move in the direction of the magnet, so also when our Lord makes known to the soul His royal presence, all our faculties turn towards Him and are joined together in this incomparable sweetness."

88 "Depart from evil, and do good."

89 Ps. 33:15.

Thus he insensibly comes to penetrate the mystical life in which, when he least expects it, he finds himself engulfed.

This new manner of life usually begins perceptibly in the illuminative way and it is perfected in the unitive way. But it is also presaged in repeated acts of the purgative way of which it is the complement.

Thus these three "ways," which are improperly so called, are not separate as some would think who have been deceived, perhaps, by the inappropriateness of that term. Rather they blend, as simple phases which are part of the development of the spiritual life. The names designating these three ways are not so characteristic that they indicate something proper and exclusive to each of them. They merely indicate the predominance in the three successive states of one of three things: purgation, illumination, or union, which in themselves are always indispensable for true progress.[80]

At the beginning it is especially necessary to emphasize purification from all evil, which at that stage is great. Later, without abandoning this purification, the soul must attend more to the acquisition and consolidation of virtues. This latter is the true phase of spiritual growth which is manifested clearly once the principle obstacles have been removed and therefore it is rightly called the progressive phase or that of the proficients.[81] But at the same time that the soul grows in virtue and sanctity and gradually arrives at the adult age, all its spiritual senses and faculties are developed and illumined. Then, ceasing to be voluble children and lovers of consolations, such souls acquire a manly fortitude and a taste for solid truth and the heroic virtues of the great and valiant souls. Prac-

80 Palaphox, *op. cit.*, Introd.: The mystical life is such that "he who finds himself in the first stage of the journey must think of the second and third, and he who is in the last stage must not forget the second. . . . The soul must be always weeping as a penitent, although it seems to have the joys of one much loved; it must try to love as a beloved, although it weeps as a penitent. When it desires God, it should at the same time fear God, and when it seems to have lofty knowledge of His divine Majesty, it should seek greater knowledge so that it can penetrate its own misery."

81 IIa IIae, q.24, a.9; St. Teresa, *Life*, chap. 22. "The time which you have spent in weeping and expiating your faults," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Genoa (*Dialogues*, II, 8), "has certainly not been useless, for your conversion was effected therein. But apart from that, it profited you nothing. ... It was time lost, for if you had not committed so many offenses, you would have been able to use that time in growing in love, in grace, and in glory."

ticing truth with all charity, in the manner of perfect men, they are now fully united with Jesus Christ and in this way are able to grow in all things according to Him and contribute efficaciously to the edification of His Church.[92] So, in the purgative phase the soul tends to be united with God by fleeing all evil and pursuing the good. In the progressive phase, at the same time that through the right practice of the virtues it is filled with light and inflamed with divine love, which is the bond of union, it is purified from the many imperfections that formerly it did not see or did not successfully eradicate. Finally, when it is fully united with God, the soul is completely illumined and purified.[93]

In the purgative phase the type of prayer by which souls are generally illumined and inflamed with the love of God, at the same time that they strive to purify, deny, and conquer themselves, is discursive prayer or meditation. In that type of prayer the words of the Psalmist are fulfilled: "In my meditation a fire shall flame out." [94] In the illuminative way discursive prayer is generally useless to the soul and sometimes proves an obstacle. The soul is illumined and inflamed and at the same time is much better purified by letting itself be gently led by the motions and inflamed in the flames of love which, without their knowing how, are springing up in their heart, because the Holy Ghost secretly communicates them. Such prayer is almost entirely affective or, as is said, the prayer of affection or supplication, which terminates in a certain loving vision which is in reality a mixture, as it were, of meditation and contemplation.[95] In that state the soul does scarcely more

92 Eph. 4:13-16; Heb. 5:12-14; St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 106.

93 Gratian, *Itiner.,* chap. 1: "When the soul has been well cleansed in the purgative way and has arrived at the divine Sun in the illuminative way, it receives in itself the image of Christ in the unitive way. From this union there comes to the soul that divine splendor which is called mystical theology. . . . The usual process (chap. 2) is to have walked along a good part of the purgative way before entering upon the illuminative way. But often God does not observe any fixed order in bestowing His mercies."

94 Ps. 38:4.

95 Gratian, *op. cit.,* chap. 9: "Those who have traveled through meditation, God carries to the high and sovereign light which is the terminus and conclusion of the illuminative way. We can call this 'spirit' or contemplation. . . . He who perseveres will never be lacking these sovereign lights."

Nouet, *Introd. à la vie d'oraison,* Bk. III, *entr.* 1: "After a person has made notable progress in meditation, he passes insensibly into affective prayer, which is the intermediate step between meditation and contemplation, just as the dawn comes be-

than burn with the affections which it has provoked or which the Holy Spirit has suggested to it or aroused in it.88 Finally, in the unitive way those divine motions and illuminations dominate to such an extent that prayer is changed, so to speak, into habitual contemplation.8990

tween the night and the day but participates in both. . . . Then, in the measure that he is perfected, he leaves aside discursive prayer and is content with a simple vision, a sweet memory of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and breaks forth in many loving affections according to the impulses which the Holy Spirit imparts to him. And when he has arrived at complete perfection, his affections and lights are so simplified that the soul sometimes remains for an hour or even a day or more in the one experience of love, contrition, reverence, or whatever other sensation has been communicated to it."

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* Bk. VI, chap, 2: "Holy meditation is the beginning of mystical theology. . . . Prayer is called meditation (chap. 3) until it yields the honey of devotion and then it is changed into contemplation. . . . The desire to obtain the love of God makes us meditate and once this love is possessed it makes us contemplate, giving us an experience of a sweetness so agreeable in that which we love that our spirit is nevet satiated with seeing and considering it."

90 From this follows the great importance of this manner of prayer in which is accomplished that whereof Ecclesiasticus speaks (2:10): "Ye that fear the Lord, love Him and your hearts shall be enlightened." Likewise Father Le Masson *(Introd, à la vie inter.,* II, chap. 6) notes that "souls that feel themselves moved by affections should let themselves be carried along without having recourse to discursive prayer except when they find themselves dry and arid. . . . The secret of prayer lies in following with simplicity the attractions of grace . . . without resorting to investigations and subtleties which perplex, preoccupy, and disturb the soul. . . . The soul should dispose itself to begin meditation with all humility and holy disinterestedness and, when it feels itself drawn by certain affections and actions, it should not resist. . . . Have no fears of illusion or deceit as long as you see that your heart is humble and your spirit possesses holy indifference."

Massoulié, *Tr. de la véritable oraison,* Part II, chaps. 10 f.: "This prayer is of great merit because by arousing the affections of the will, it excites love, which in turn produces all the other movements and is the root of all the merits we can acquire. . . . Affective prayer can be called a continual and actual practice of the love of God. . . . As often as a soul makes fervent acts of love of God, it obtains an increase of grace and receives the Holy Ghost in a special manner. Whence, during the time spent in holy affections which are true and efficacious, there is verified in the soul a continual pouring forth of the divine Spirit."

9T Surin, *Catéch. spir.,* Part I, chap. 2: "There are three classes of mental prayer: discursive, affective, and contemplative. Discursive prayer is proper to beginners; affective prayer, to the proficients; and contemplation, in the ordinary course of events, to the perfect, although sometimes in His mercy God communicates it to souls that are just beginning."

Living Flame of Love, cant. 3: "The state of beginners comprises meditation and discursive acts. In this state it is necessary for the soul to be given material for meditation, and to make interior acts on its own account, and take advantage of the spiritual heat and fire which comes from sense; this is necessary in order to accustom the senses and desires to good things, so that, by being fed with this delight, they may become detached from the world. But when this has been to some extent effected, God begins to bring the soul into the state of contemplation, which is wont

Mysticism, then, without ascetical practices, is a vanity and an illusion; and asceticism without mystical introspections, pious affections, and ardent aspirations for true union with God, can almost be regarded as time wasted. It is work without fruit, navigation without a port, a body without a soul, the letter without the spirit. It can be reduced to a series of routine exercises which feed but do not vivify. True mysticism always advances with the help of asceticism, in continual abnegation, carrying the cross with Christ and for Christ, and this cross is for enamored souls at the same time a bundle of myrrh and a cluster of cypress.[98] On the other hand, asceticism is entirely subordinated to mysticism. By means of privations and holy practices performed in spirit and in truth it seeks the secret gift of God and the precious pearl of His kingdom in the depth of our hearts. The contemplative soul is "a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer," [99] and the ascetic begs its sweetest Savior to draw it so that it will run after Him to the odor of His ointments.[100]

Jesus Christ is at once the way, the truth, and the life. Following His bloody footsteps we become illumined with the light of His truth, for "he that doth truth, cometh to the light" and he that follows Christ "walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." [101] By means of that life-giving light we see through an intimate experience that Jesus is our life. "For me, to live is

to happen especially in religious, because these, having renounced things of the world, quickly attune their senses and desires to God; and then they have nothing to do save to pass from meditation to contemplation."

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *Visions and Instructions,* chap. 62: "Thus do we see that mental prayer leads to supernatural prayer. It is supernatural prayer when the soul, raised above itself by the divine contemplation and plenitude, is transported far beyond its nature and enters into the divine comprehension more profoundly than the nature of things would otherwise permit and in this comprehension it finds light. But the knowledge which it acquires at the sources, the soul cannot explain because all that it sees and feels is superior to its nature. In these three types of prayer (vocal, mental, and supernatural) the soul acquires a certain knowledge of itself and of God. It loves in the measure that it knows and it desires in the measure that it loves. The proof of love is not a partial, but a total, transformation. But since this transformation is not complete, the soul applies itself entirely to seeking a new transformation and to enter more intimately into the divine union."

98 Cant, i: 12 f.

99 Cant. 3:6.

100 Cant. 1:3.

101 John 3:21; 8:12.

Christ." Thus faithful imitation leads infallibly to the full illumination of the mystical union.

Jesus Christ is not divided. Although He manifests Himself only by degrees, first as the way and the model, and later as the absolute truth and light of revelation, and finally as the fullness of life, He is always at once our all: the way, the truth, and the life. He is the model of all men as the divine exemplar and the splendor of the glory of the Father; the light for the revelation of the Gentiles; the power and wisdom of God; and the Word of life which appeared among us full of grace and truth so that we all might receive of His fullness. In Him is the life that is the light of men. If, then, we encircle our body with the mortification of Jesus, it is so that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh; and if we die to the world and to ourselves, it is that our life may be hidden with Christ in God.[102]

"We cannot have fire without blood," says St. Catherine of Siena, "nor blood without fire." [103] That is to say, there is no perfect charity without sacrifices and mortification and there is no spirit of sacrifice without true charity, which is the divine fire which illumines and vivifies and unites the soul to God.

He who is the son of truth hears the voice of Jesus.[104] And this voice calls to all: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, Out of his

102 See II Cor. 4:10; Col. 3:3. St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue,* chap. 96. *Imitation of Christ,* III, 56: "My son, the more you strive to depart from yourself, the more will you enter into Me. Not to desire anything outside yourself will give you internal peace; and interiorly abandoning yourself unites you to God. Follow Me; I am the way, the truth, and the life. Without a way one cannot progress; without truth one cannot know; without life the soul does not live."

103 Letter 52: "Our divine Doctor gave us a medicine against all our infirmities: a baptism of blood and fire wherein He washes, purifies, and consumes all the dross and imperfections of the soul. The soul must pass through fire and blood which are not lacking when the love of the Holy Ghost, who is fire, burns. Love was the hand that wounded the Son of God and made Him shed His blood, and since that time they have always been united and in such perfect union that we cannot have fire without blood nor blood without fire. Each day we can receive this baptism which has been given us gratuitously and not as a debt. And when the soul understands the excellence of this good which it possesses and sees itself burning in the fire of the Holy Ghost, then it swoons with love for its Creator so that it is entirely lost to self and, though dead, it lives and does not feel in itself any love or taste for any created thing but only for the divine goodness by which its love is made perfect in God."

104 John 18:37.

belly shall flow rivers of living water." [105] "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, . . . and you shall find rest to your souls." [106]

We know that divine wisdom invites all the little ones. But if we do not truly convert ourselves and become as children in simplicity and innocence, so that we may be docile to the voice of truth; if we do not have a true hunger and thirst for justice, as newborn babes desiring the rational milk in order to grow unto salvation in Jesus Christ[107] and to grow unto the stature of the perfect man; if, finally, we do not take up the cross of Jesus and learn of Him meekness and humility, we shall never succeed in entering by the narrow gate of the mystical kingdom of God which is within us nor shall we ever find rest for our souls. He who does not take up his cross lovingly and follow the Savior is not worthy of Him.[108]

If, then, we have not yet had the good fortune to find the hidden treasure, let us not place the blame on anyone but rather on our own listlessness in searching for that treasure. Let us not try to justify our spiritual weakness, our negligences and lukewarmness, by the specious argument of not having been called. Let us, rather, examine our breast and probe our wounds, and we shall discover the true causes for not having heard the divine voice: the hardness of our hearts, attachment to our own judgments, our rebellious will, our own tastes and attachments, our obstinate aversion to the cross and humiliations of Jesus Christ, our continual resistance to the sweet invitations of His loving Spirit, and our flight from that mystical solitude to which He desires to lead us in order to speak to our hearts.[109] Let us frankly confess these sorrowful facts and let us reform our lives in order truly to follow Jesus and be docile to His Spirit, thus to find rest and the ineffable delights of His kingdom which are so little known and therefore so little appreciated and sought after by those who walk to perdition in search of

105 John 7:37 f.

106 Matt. 11:28 f.

10TI Pet. 2:2.

108 Matt. 10:38.

109 To many souls today the sentence of St. Stephen could be applied: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:51). Therefore does the Church plead in the litany of the saints: "From blindness of heart, deliver us, O Lord."

vanities and passing shadows.[110] Meanwhile let us not aggravate our evil and that of many other souls by many vain excuses. Let us not turn our excuses into false doctrines and harmful counsels thereby closing, with lamentable superficiality and imprudence, the gate of those gifts to fervent souls that follow after the sweet aroma of Jesus Christ who sweetly captivates all who have a clean heart and healthy senses. Our obligation as His ministers is not only to invite and encourage such souls, but to oblige them to enter into the great banquet of the nuptials of the Lamb. "Compel them to enter." If we act otherwise, we are traitors or at least disloyal servants, depriving Him of the delights He finds in dwelling with the sons of men. Meanwhile He Himself is incessantly knocking at the doors to enter and to celebrate the mystical banquet. "Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."[111]

[110] *Imitation of Christ,* II, i: "Learn to despise external things and give thyself to interior things and you will see the kingdom of God come to thee. . . . Christ will come to thee, manifesting to thee His consolation, if thou prepare thy interior mansion worthily for Him. Frequent is His visitation to the interior man, sweet is His conversation, pleasing is His consolation, great is His peace, and exceeding remarkable is His intimacy. Oh, faithful soul, prepare thy heart for this Spouse so that He will deign to come to thee and dwell in thee. . . . If you reject external consolation, you can gaze on heavenly things and frequently rejoice interiorly."

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 33: "If anyone wishes to experience Me within his soul, I shall not abandon him; if anyone wishes to see Me, I would give him in rapture the vision of My face; and if anyone would wish to speak to Me, we would converse together with great joy. . . . Those who love Me and follow the path which I followed—the way of My sorrows—they are My lawful sons. Those who have their interior eye fixed on My passion and death, on My death which is the life and salvation of the world, on My death and not on anything else, they are My lawful sons, and the others are not."

Ven. Marina de Escobar, *Obras,* chap. 30: "God willed to show me contemplative souls who place all their efforts in pleasing Him and whom He sustains with a heavenly nourishment. They feel a great hunger to know the divine majesty but for worldly goods and satisfactions they feel only repugnance. That merciful God who lets Himself be found by all who seek Him with holy perseverance gives them even in this life a few drops of the consolations and delights of the blessed."

Mary of Agreda, *Mystical City of God,* Part I, Bk. II, chap. 13: "If creatures would cease to occupy themselves with worldly interests and loves, they would, through the inestimable gifts of the Holy Ghost, share without limit in the torrents of the Divinity."

[111] Apoc. 3:20. "My infinite love is always seeking souls to free them from condemnation. . . . I illumine them; I call to their free will with countless invitations, more vibrant and more varied than the radiations of the noonday sun. And when the soul opens itself to the brightness of My love, it is immediately inundated in the

"He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith. . . . And the spirit of the bride says: Come. And he that heareth, let him say: Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come: and he that will, let him take the water of life, freely. . . . Come, Lord Jesus!" [112]

Many souls do not heed that sweet voice; they do not enter into themselves and dispose themselves to hear it by saying with the Psalmist: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for He will speak peace unto His people";[113] they do not have their thoughts fixed on His holy commandments and their eyes on His path; they do not arouse in themselves the desire to drink the mystical living water. Therefore, and not for any other empty reasons, as Blosius observes,[114] there are so few contemplatives and so many who do not even know that intimate depth of the soul wherein the Lord has His kingdom, to which He invites us to converse with Him and to satiate ourselves in the fount of eternal life.[115]

fire of that love," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Genoa. The saint herself then adds: "Humanity should consider as full of shadows the sad condition to which pride had reduced it. In the midst of the darkness of its obscure prison it was ignorant of its misery and in its ignorance it did not suspect the number or the gravity of its wounds. But now that the Lord has deigned to illumine it, it discovers the dangers to which sensuality had exposed it" (*Dialogues,* II, 3).

Since there are few who attain to those favors, what the Apostle says is also undeniably true: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction; whose God is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:18-20).

Father Hoyos understood that "the infinite love of God for men inclines Him to communicate His special favors to many, but unfortunately there are very few who prepare themselves to receive these favors" (*Vida,* p. 84).

112 Apoc. 3:22; 22:17, 20. *Imitation of Christ,* III, chap. 34: "Purify, gladden, illumine, and vivify my spirit with Thy powers so that it may inhere in Thee in excessive jubilation. Oh, when will that happy and longed-for hour come when Thy presence will satiate me and Thou wilt be my all in all?"

113 Ps. 84:9. *Imitation of Christ,* III, 1: "Blessed is the soul which hears God who is speaking within it, and which receives from His divine mouth the words of comfort."

114 Inst., chap. 12.

116 Ibid.: "If the spiritual man continually exercises himself in tending to God with fervent aspirations; if with internal colloquies and ardent desires he seeks incessantly to be united with God; and if he remains constant in the mortification and negation of self to such an extent that neither because of many labors or innumerable distractions does he abandon his holy resolve, there is no doubt that he will arrive at the mystical union, if not in this life, then at least just before death. . . . The ascetic, then, should persevere in asking, seeking, calling, and hoping with longanimity. In conformity with this, St. Paul tells us: 'So run that you may obtain. And

They fear this wisdom because it appears to them to be hard and difficult. Intimidated, they judge that it is not for them and thus they lose the peace and happiness reserved for those who persevere.[116]

Some prudent and respected authors seek to avoid the excesses of false mysticism and of illusioned and presumptuous souls who wish to fly without wings and rise to the heights of contemplation without passing through the difficult struggles of meditation and the other exercises and trials of the ascetic life. With this purpose in mind, these authors deem it opportune to insist on the importance of asceticism and often prescind from the lofty questions of mysticism which pertain only to the proficient souls. But that tendency, like so many others, has passed beyond what is fitting. It has established a complete separation between asceticism and mysticism, with grave detriment to both, for actually they should mutually aid each other. This tendency has succeeded in discrediting many books which should have contributed and could have contributed much toward the sanctification of souls. From this follows the many evils which Father Caussade rightly laments [117] and which are the natural effects of the prejudices that existed even in the time of St. Teresa and that caused her much distress.[118]

The study of mysticism was abandoned as if it were something dangerous, and the books which treated of it were taken from the hands of spiritual persons who were very much in need of

everyone that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things' " (I Cor. 9:24!·).

116Ecclus. 6:18-37: "My son, from thy youth up receive instruction, and even to thy gray hairs thou shalt find wisdom. . . . For in working about her thou shalt labor a little, and shalt quickly eat of her fruits. How very unpleasant is wisdom to the unlearned, and the unwise will not continue with her. . . . Come to her with all thy mind, and keep her ways with all thy power. Search for her, and she shall be made known to thee, and when thou hast gotten her, let her not go. For in the latter end thou shalt find rest in her, and she shall be turned to thy joy. . . . Let thy thoughts be upon the precepts of God, and meditate continually on His commandments: and He will give thee a heart, and the desire of wisdom shall be given to thee."

117 "Because of these wretched precautions," says the devout Jesuit in his preliminary dialogue, "the reading of the mystics has been abandoned and there is not to be found in the cloisters so many interior souls, dispossessed of all things and dead to the world and to themselves. On the other hand, wherever the love of reading such books has been fostered, we find in an equal proportion recollection, abnegation, humility, and evangelical simplicity."

118 Way of Perfection, chap. 21.

them. There were even some who with the greatest reluctance permitted such reading to those who themselves were to become directors of souls, thus systematically making them "the blind leading the blind." 118 The result was a general forgetfulness of the science of the saints,119 if not, indeed, a positive disdain for the knowledge of the ways of the Lord, to whom they were saying implicitly: "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." 121 The persons who acted thus were like those rejected ones of whom Osee spoke,122 who could not help but become destroyers instead of builders.

Not finding in the mouths of so many priests of God the knowledge which they had a right to expect,123 many souls, who otherwise could have arrived at great heights, were led astray, remained stationary, or retrogressed.124 The fault was also theirs in part because they knew not how to persevere and because they did not heed the Father of lights and fervently ask for the Spirit of counsel, fortitude, and wisdom, who would have led them sweetly and freed them from deception.125 126 But the majority, if they should have had the good fortune to find a competent director, would have avoided that delusion and they would have found the light and counsel they needed.128

Where there is good direction and the stimulus of holy examples and sound books of mysticism, contemplative souls abound. Where these advantages are lacking, such souls are extremely rare. Only a few souls who are much stronger and who are able to navigate against the wind and the current, succeed in reaching the heights. Thus ninety-nine per cent, says Father Godinez, are wrecked in the various phases of trial. It is well known how much poor di-

119 Matt. 15:14.

120 Wisd. 10:10; Prov. 30:3.

121 Job 21:14.

122 Osee 4:6.

223 Mai. 2:7.

124 Father Pozo, *Vida de la V. Micaela Aguirre,* II, ti: "How many souls would be good if there were someone to impart to them the bread of doctrine! How many would advance in perfection if there were someone who for the love of God and without self-interest would apply himself to direct them! . . . The majority flee the task and, of the few who do apply themselves, many do not have a pure intention."

125 Jas. 1:5, 17. See St. Vincent Ferrer, *The Spiritual Life,* chap. 4.

126 Godinez, *Teologia mistica,* VII, 1.

rectors impeded St. Teresa, whereas most of her disciples, as, for example, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, entered quickly into the heights of contemplation.[127] Why did not so many other souls enter who were filled with holy desires? Because they lacked the light, the direction, the example, the stimulus, or the aid which they normally required. It is not in vain that the Apostle desires and charges us not to ignore spiritual things, but that we should appreciate them well and even desire and strive to procure them and aspire, for our own betterment and the edification of the Church, for the greatest charisms.[128]

The result of the total separation of mysticism from asceticism is the belief that only the latter is of importance to us and that we have no reason to aspire to the heroic virtues of the great contemplatives nor feel that we have a vocation to ascend to such heights. But what saint is there who, at least at the end of his life, was not in his own way a contemplative? And what Christian is there who is not obliged to imitate the perfection, not only of the great saints, but of the heavenly Father Himself? [129]

127 St. Jane Frances once said that in the generality of cases the Daughters of the Visitation felt an attraction for the most simple presence of God and that she had observed that all who dedicated themselves to prayer as they ought later felt this same attraction.

128 "Now concerning spiritual things, my brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . . . But be zealous for the better gifts. . . . Follow after charity, be zealous for spiritual gifts; but rather that you may prophesy. . . . He that speaketh in a tongue, edifieth himself: but he that prophesieth, edifieth the Church. And I would have you all to speak with tongues, but rather to prophesy" (I Cor. 12:1, 31; 14:1, 4f.). "Of *spiritual things,"* comments St. Thomas *(In 1 Cor. 12, lec.* 1), "that is, of the gifts of graces received from the Holy Ghost, *my brethren, I would not have you ignorant.* For it is the greatest type of ingratitude to be unmindful of benefits received, as Seneca says in his *De beneficiis* And therefore, in order that man may not be ungrateful to God, he should not be ignorant of spiritual graces. *Now we have received . . . the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God* (I Cor. 2:12). *Therefore is my people led away captive, because they had not knowledge,* scil., of spiritual things" (Isa. 5:13).

Concerning the incredible harm caused by this ignorance of the ways of God, see Meynard, *Traité de la vie intérieure,* I, no. 167, where he discusses the confusion experienced by souls at the novelty of the first acts of contemplation, and tells how, believing themselves to be wasting their time in slothfulness, they struggle in vain to meditate and wear themselves out in resistance to the Holy Ghost. Then their directors, instead of enlightening and encouraging them, begin to cause them even greater confusion and to fill them with dismay to the extent that many of these souls acquire a distaste for prayer and finally abandon it altogether.

129 Weiss, *Apologie,* IX, 4: "The Saviot imposes on all who hear His words the obligation to strive to be perfect as is His heavenly Father (Matt. 5:48). Note well that He did not impose this obligation on the apostles alone or on any select people,

We have seen that contemplation is both desirable and attainable. We are all called to it and we should all aspire to it. For the very reason that it is recommended to us and offered to us as the crown of ordinary prayer and the ascetical life, there can be no complete separation between asceticism and mysticism.

But today we see many who obstinately separate these two phases in theory and then later in practice confuse them so excessively and unfortunately that they call mystical what is in reality only the rudiments of asceticism. Thus they label as mystics any souls that try to avoid dissipation, laxity, and slothfulness. They themselves shun mysticism as something "superior and extraordinary," to which they do not think themselves called; they end up in being neither the one nor the other, without mysticism or asceticism. They desire to be considered very good Christians, exemplary priests, or model religious, but actually they are completely mundane. It could not be otherwise, since they separate what is essentially one and they divide the unity of Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. He who does not strive to live united with Christ, who does not imitate Him as he ought, will never truly know Him and will despise His truth. He who does not aspire to true sanctification which is found in mystical union with Christ, that is, in living a life that is totally vivified and directed by the Holy Ghost, will never be a good Christian in the true sense.[130]

nor did He give it simply as a counsel. No, it is a command which applies to all those to whom He directed it: to all those who hear His words. What is of real importance in supernatural virtue is sanctity. No man is more complete than the perfect man; nor is there any Christian more perfect than the saint. The reason why there is such a small number of true Christians is owing to the scarcity of perfect men."

Sauvé, *Etats,* p. 115: "Every soul that earnestly desires to arrive where its faith leads it is a saint. The Holy Ghost placed in the soul, at baptism, all that is needed to reach that state and He is ever present to make the soul live, if it so wishes, with a perfection which is greater than ordinary. It is sufficient for this soul to abandon itself to His direction and impulses. . . . All of us could experience those special touches, those directions, those impulses of the Spirit of wisdom, of understanding, of fear . . . if we so desired, every day, every hour, without ceasing."

130 Grou, *Le don de soi-même,* x: "As men, we ought to follow reason in all things without ever permitting ourselves anything which reason rejects. As Christians, we should follow the Spirit of God in all things without ever separating ourselves from Him. Any interior disposition or external action which the divine Spirit does not recognize as His own is blameworthy in a Christian or at least does not merit any praise and is altogether useless for his salvation. According to this rule, which is undeniable, how many works will be counted as lost to heaven! How

So we see that modem asceticism, which caters to the indolent and those who disdain mysticism and mystics, is, as Father Weiss says,[131] nothing other than the "philosophy of a life of comfort."

The great masters of earlier times made no distinction between asceticism and mysticism, for to them the former was the foundation of the latter. For that reason, they used the two names indiscriminately. They would counsel the ascetic or beginner to practice holy introspection in order to prepare himself to enter into the secret contemplation, and they would command the contemplative to proceed as the perfect ascetic.

Blosius follows this same line of thought when he observes:

> All should aspire to perfection and the mystical union. . . . They are much to be pitied who, preoccupied with sensible things, spend their whole lives on external exercises and are forgetful of the center of their soul and that blessed union with God. . . . They say with their heart, if not with their words: "Let him who wishes unite himself to Him; we do not care for that because we do not feel so inclined." . . . Exterior practices are good and pleasing to God, . . . but more valuable beyond compare are internal exercises; the fervent desires whereby the soul is directed to God, not by sense impressions and images, but in a supernatural manner so that it may be intimately united with Him. . . . Those who despise this union will have much to suffer in purgatory. . . . God desires to work in them and He waits to see whether He will find them disposed and free of obstacles. Aleanwhile He leaves them to their exercises and opinions because He does not wish to force anyone. He wishes to draw them all to His knowledge and to unite Himself with them if they do not prevent Him. He takes it very ill that we are content with so little when there is so much that He wishes to give us, for He desires to give us Himself and that in a most excellent manner. . . . How great, then, is our blindness and indolence, we who have been made to be united with Him in such a manner that we shall begin here to taste our future happiness![132]

many wasted hours there are in the lives of most Christians! And whence comes this immense loss, if not from the lack of abandoning oneself to God to be completely governed by His Spirit?"

131 *Apologie,* IX, 6.

132 *Institutio spiritualis,* chaps, i, 5, *passim.*

Let us not excuse our slothfulness and laxity under the vain pretext that we were not called to those "extraordinary ways," for God calls all of us to His sweet rest.[133] Therefore let us not imitate the Pharisees and close the gates of the kingdom to others because of our pseudo-ascetical doctrines, besides resolving not to enter ourselves. There is only one asceticism and that is the one which teaches us to deny ourselves and embrace the cross of Christ in order to be despoiled of our vileness and to be configured and united to Him. He who truly does this will receive the hundredfold in this life and sooner or later will enter into intimate union and communication with God.[134]

Today, fortunately, now that the centuries-old error in this matter—which catered to the slothful, utilitarian, and lazy—is recognized, there is a definite attempt to remedy it. Thus we see a marvelous rebirth of mystical studies which are now judged indispensable for the good direction of all pious souls and for one's own spiritual progress. The *Revue Thomiste* of March, 1907, says in this regard:

> The mystical life is the normal crowning of the Christian life. Every Christian here below ought to tend to a life of perfect union with God, and the life of union is the mystical life. This life is offered to all, though few attain it. But it is to be believed that many fervent Christians do at-

133 Actually, the Scriptures do not speak of extraordinary ways, but only of the ways of peace, of justice, of prudence, and of wisdom; or rather, of the narrow path of abnegation and the acceptance of one's daily crosses by which the soul is disposed truly to follow Christ, being docile to the divine motions and inspirations which are offered to all and without which no one can be sanctified. We should all exert ourselves to enter by the one narrow gate which leads to true life, or rather, to the divine rest of souls in union with the Savior. He who does not endeavor to enter, however much he may believe himself secure in the ordinary ways, will be counted among the many who travel the broad path which leads to perdition.

134 Blessed Henry Suso, *Disc, spir.,* II: "If the soul endeavors to engrave on itself the image of Jesus Christ, it is in order to draw close to the divine Word and through Him to be united with the persons of the most holy Trinity. He who does not attain this grace during life, will attain it after death or at the moment of death. And even if he does not attain it, so lofty a union should be greatly desired, and one should direct to this end all the longings of one's heart, because God never leaves unrewarded the ardent desires of holy souls."

St. Hilary, *De Trinitate,* II, io: "If I begin to walk, Thou dost run, and I cannot overtake Thee. But though I know I shall not arrive, it shall please me that I have walked. For he who aspires to the infinite, though he does not reach his goal, will profit much from walking."

Rodriguez, *Ejercicio de perfection,* I, tr. i, 8: "It will help us greatly to reach perfection if we always keep our eyes on lofty things. . . . Be mindful of that which the Apostle counsels us: 'Be zealous for the better gifts' (I Cor. 12:31). Undertake great and excellent things. This means is of much importance."

tain to the lower grades. . . . The mystical state is, then, an eminent grace and greatly to be desired. Its beginnings are manifested much earlier than is commonly believed. The mystical state is not usually habitual, except in souls that have reached the perfection of the unitive way; but even in the illuminative way, and sometimes in the purgative way, the soul that is faithful to grace works mystically from time to time. . . . How is it possible, actually, that the gifts of the Holy Ghost could remain inactive in the soul; simply as habits, without performing any acts, until the unitive state?

In the preface to *La vie avec Dieu,* by Père Faucillon (pp. 33-36), Father Schwalm says:

Contemplation enters into the normal development of virtue and the Christian life. . . . It is not, of course, the general state of souls in grace, but it is the peak to which they tend by the good exercise of the virtues. It is the effect of triumphant divine love. . . . The Dominican mystics were unanimous in arousing the desire for this grace. But it is not merely a tradition of the School. It is a doctrine shared with St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard, Richard and Hugh of St. Victor, Cassian, and St. Gregory the Great. The Fathers of the Church had shown them the way . . . Tauler, Suso, and St. Catherine of Siena deduced practical conclusions and showed their readers how to dispose themselves to receive the gift of contemplation . . . joyfully considering it an obligation to attract fervent souls to it.

We can terminate this discussion by stating categorically with Father Weiss: "Mysticism is truly the flower and terminus of the Christian life. It is Christianity in its full development. . . . Therefore it is the concern of all who wish to accept Christianity in its fullness. Mysticism is for all. . . . To withdraw oneself from its obligation is to disregard one's salvation. . . . There is no condition, state, or occupation which authorizes anyone to say that mysticism does not concern him." [135]

The Mystical Question

So intermingled are asceticism and mysticism and so difficult is it to distinguish them with precision and characterize them that, to assign to each its true differential characteristics, has become the

[135] *Apologie,* IX, V.

object of lively discussions. It is to be hoped that such discussions will be productive of practical conclusions.

What is disputed in the mystical question is the true concept which we should formulate about the mystical state and the definition which most properly fits it. Once its constitutive elements are known, one can better discover whether it is frequent, attainable, and desirable and how we ought to dispose ourselves to reach it.[138] This, of course, in a practical way is of the greatest interest.

The complete mystical and ascetical states are sufficiently distinguished by the provisional definitions we gave at the beginning of this book. We said that asceticism is the theoretico-practical science of the ordinary ways of Christian perfection in which the supernatural life is lived as yet unconsciously and *modo humano*. Mysticism, on the other hand, is the experimental science of the "extraordinary" or supernatural ways in which that life is lived more or less consciously and *supra modum humanum*.

According to these definitions the difference appears to be great and does not allow for any confusion of the full or complete states and their characteristics. Yet, when these things are studied more profoundly, it is discovered that there is no discontinuity, no diversity, but a perfect unity, a blending of the whole long series of gradual transitions between the two states which, at first sight, seem quite unconnected. If in human life there is a perfect continuity from the unconscious state of early infancy to the full consciousness of the adult age, it is no less evident in the corresponding successive states of the supernatural life. This is true to such an extent that it is impossible to identify the precise moment at which the one terminates and the other begins. In reality, the life of grace is a complete unity, from the pouring of the baptismal waters until its full expansion on the eternal shores.

Actually no one would deliberately attempt to say when the ascetical state ends and when the mystical state begins because, in truth, the ascetical state cannot and should not cease entirely. Further, the mystical state does not begin with the termination of the ascetical state, but during it. At most there is a preponderance of the one and a lessening of the other. In the period of *purgation* there is a predominance of the activity of ascetical initiative; in

136 See our work *Cuestiones Misticas,* where these points are treated extensively.

the state of *union,* the passivity of trusting abandonment or the gentleness of the sweet mystical repose; but in the phase of *illumination* or *advancement,* there is a compénétration, and sometimes an alteration, of the two states. Therefore, when the breathing of the divine Spirit ceases or is lacking, the soul should, contrary to what is taught by the quietists, make use, as much as lies in its power, of all the ordinary recourses, occupying itself in meditation, spiritual reading, particular examination, holy affections, and the various exercises of the active life until it again experiences the divine motion and finds the repose of contemplation.[137]

Saudreau, who rightly considers asceticism the preparation for the mystical state and therefore ardently defends the view that the mystical state is attainable and desirable, characterizes it in all its phases by two elements: a superior but confused knowledge and an intense but semi-conscious love or *alogo,* as the ancients would say. These are the only two things which he regards as essential elements in the whole process of the mystical life; the rest he considers nothing more than accessories. "There are," he says, "in any mystical state these two elements: a superior knowledge of God which, though general and confused, gives a lofty idea of His incomprehensible grandeur, and a non-rationalized but intense love, communicated by God Himself, a love which the soul could never attain by its own powers." [138]

But these two characteristics are constitutive elements only so far as they are perfect, and not in regard to their imperfect or confused forms. In the latter state, they characterize only the beginnings of the mystical life and the phases of aridity and obscurity. But when the gifts of wisdom and understanding are manifested in a very high degree and the soul, by a clear intellectual vision, perceives the divine attributes and, loving with all its strength, laments that it cannot love God as it sees that He deserves to be loved, its love is no longer *alogo* nor is its knowledge confused. But the summit of this mystical state is yet much higher.

One cannot, then, consider as merely accessory that which is manifested and made more and more secure with progressive de-

[137] See St. Teresa, *Life,* chap. 13; Bartholomew of the Martyrs, *Comp. Myst.,* chap. 18; Molina, *De la oration,* tr. 2, chap. 6.

[138] *L'Etat mystique,* p. in.

velopment, although sometimes, in periods of trial or desolation, it seems to be hidden. Only the particular phenomena of each phase, which later disappear into other new ones, merit this qualification. But what is manifested actually in any phase, having begun virtually in a preceding phase and persisting eminently in a succeeding phase, belongs to the very essence of the mystical life.

Boulesteix *(loc. cit.),* recognizing that mysticism can be defined as the experimental science of God, more accurately states that this science consists in a "mysterious knowledge and love which enables us to perceive God in a truly ineffable manner" and which is an effect of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.[138] Hence the more ineffable the knowledge and love, the more positive and elevated they are, for they presuppose a very lofty communication of the gifts. Likewise the better these communications are experienced, the worse they are expressed, because they do not fall into human words.

Poulain, who believes in an essential distinction between mysticism and asceticism and thinks that the ascetical state can reach to the prayer of simplicity, characterizes the mystical state, or rather "the common basis of all the grades of the mystical union," as a certain spiritual sensation, like an interior touch, of the presence of God.[140] But in this there is contained only the cognoscitive element and not the affective element, which is equally, if not more, important. Moreover, as Saudreau replies, that presence is not perceived in the night of the senses which, according to Poulain himself, and also St. John of the Cross and Father Surin, belongs to the mystical state. Finally, if the prayer of simplicity leads, as he himself admits (p. 12), "as on a smooth incline to the mystical state," it is because there is no discontinuity between the two states, and that prayer is partly acquired and partly infused, for it would not offer the sweetness which is had in the loving presence of God without a higher impulse of the Spirit of piety and wisdom.

Thus, already in the prayer of simplicity or of simple attention or loving gaze, there should be a certain divine contact, taste, and odor, though the soul is unaware of them. Later, in the night of

139 In some articles which appeared in *Razôn y Fe,* Father Gârate also maintains that the essence of the mystical state consists in the "ineffable knowledge of God, produced by a certain supernatural light which is communicated in a stable manner."

140 Des grâces, p. 78.

the senses, there is a change of aspect and intensity in these spiritual senses, and they are felt as privations because of the aridity, distaste, and annoyance which result from a strong divine action which is painful to the soul not yet purified and disposed to receive it with pleasure.

In reality, what constitutes the mystical state is the predominance of the gifts and their effects—the fruits of the Holy Ghost—over ordinary living faith and the corresponding works of hope and charity, while the predominance of the latter over the former constitutes and to a certain extent characterizes the ascetical state.

But sometimes the ascetic, moved by the divine Spirit, can work in an entirely mystical manner, though he does not advert to it. On the other hand, when the Holy Ghost temporarily departs from mystics, although they may be very elevated and enriched with His great effects and fruits which give all their acts greater intensity and value, they must to a certain extent proceed after the manner of ascetics.

The gifts are infused, as we have seen, with sanctifying grace and they grow in proportion as charity grows. As Father Weiss observes,[141] the gifts are necessary not only to arrive at true sanctity and to be able to perform certain difficult actions, but also to practice the Christian virtues with the required perfection and even to attain salvation.[142]

By means of the gifts all the faithful who live in grace can sometimes work heroically and mystically.[143] So, in the very dawn of the spiritual life, the mystical life is begun although in a very

141 Apologie, IX, 3.

142 See Ia Ilae, q.68, a.z; q.69, a. 1; IIa Ilae, q. 139, a. 1; *III Sent.,* dist. 36, q. 1, a.3.

143 "No one can say," he states *(ibid.,* no. 6), "that he does not need the gifts of the Holy Ghost or that these gifts are not offered to him with grace or that without them he is able to practice the various grades of Christian virtue as his condition demands. Everyone is not obliged to arrive at the heights of perfection immediately, but all are obliged to conform to the impulses of the divine Spirit and strive to reach a higher grade. All possess these gifts, but in different degrees of fullness, as long as they are in the state of grace. Therefore all are able to become better if they permit themselves to work and proceed in accordance with these gifts. All can perform heroic acts and can become perfect and saints if they place no obstacle to the gifts of the Holy Ghost."

These gifts, according to St. Francis de Sales *(Love of God,* XI, 15), "are not only inseparable from charity but, if rightly considered, are the principal virtues, properties, and qualities of charity. ... As regards its effect, wisdom is nothing else than love which enables one to taste and see how sweet is the Lord."

remiss state. In reality, the mystical state comprises the whole development of the Christian life and the entire way of evangelical perfection, however much its principal manifestations are reserved for the unitive way in which the soul possesses, as it were, the habit of heroism and of the divine and, exercising itself perfectly in the most difficult acts of virtue, it works clearly *supra modum humanum*. In the purgative way and even to some extent in the illuminative way the soul, struggling with difficulties, overcoming obstacles, and avoiding impediments, must work by the light of faith and under its own initiative in a human manner *(modo humano),* without experiencing very clearly (or at least without knowing that it feels) the hidden motion of the Consoler and the taste, sweet or bitter, He infuses in it with the gift of wisdom.[144] For since this taste or fervor is as yet sensible, being manifested in the inferior rather than the superior part of the soul, although at times it is perceived clearly, whether it is divine or natural is not yet clearly recognized.

But from time to time, in the midst of its efforts, the faithful soul perceives certain impulses or delicate attractions and certain tastes or distastes in which it distinguishes, recognizes, or at least suspects a mysterious divine odor or taste. When the soul advances in the interior ways and in the fruits of life which that motion leaves in it, it cannot help but recognize the special impulse of the Holy Ghost.[145]

So the soul which as yet proceeds along the ordinary paths sometimes produces truly mystical acts, just as the mystic on many occasions, produces ascetical acts and the mystical acts are gradually increased until the soul is purified and illumined and then they become almost habitual. When this happens, when the soul habitually produces heroic acts of virtue, and, dead to self and offering

144 Denis the Carthusian, *De contempt.,* I, 41: "The gift of wisdom in its first stage constitutes the first grade of contemplation." And since the gifts are necessary for salvation, it follows that even for this there is required some mystical act.

145 Gardeil, *Gifts of the Holy Ghost,* pp. 154-56: "Oh, most consoling doctrine! Since the Holy Ghost dwells with His gifts in all just souls, it depends on us to make use of them under the influence of grace. But, you will ask me, 'Who will give us that grace?' You already have it if you sincerely desire it. . . . Turn, then, your eyes to that interior Guest . . . and when the movement of your souls turns to contemplation you will discover expansive horizons, heights, and depths that you never suspected; which faith alone never revealed to you, and which you have come to know with the eyes of the heart."

no resistance, lets itself be moved by the impulses, touches, and breathings of the Spirit who, as on a delicate musical instrument, strokes the soul at His pleasure and draws from it divine melodies (St. Gregory Nazianzen), then we can say that the soul is fully in the mystical state although at times it must still descend to the ascetical state.

The habitual mystical state begins fully with the prayer of union, although there are still great interruptions until the soul reaches the full and stable union. But the mystical state is initiated in the affective prayer and then, in the night of the senses, however much the soul is unable to recognize the fact, it is accentuated more and more. This is marked on the one hand by the increasing difficulty or impossibility of meditating in the ordinary way and on the other hand by the continual vision or the loving or painful presence of God.[148] Then it will be manifested clearly, although briefly and at great intervals, in the state of infused recollection and much better and more so in the prayer of quiet. These are already mystical states but short and interrupted, and therefore many authors are accustomed to identify the mystical life with union, regarding the other phases merely as preparations.

Since the time of St. Teresa all the successive phases which follow after a person begins clearly to experience supernatural or infused prayer (which he can never attain by ordinary means no matter how much he may try) in which the soul must be governed by other laws which are far superior to those of the habitual ascetic, are considered as belonging to the mystical state. The saint saw that this new manner of prayer was verified in the prayer of recollection, which was therefore called infused. This differs from the prayer acquired by our own efforts, which costs much labor and

[148] *Dark Night of the Soul,* I, chap, i: "Into this dark night souls begin to enter when God draws them forth from the state of beginners—which is the state of those that meditate upon the spiritual road—and begins to set them in the state of progressives—which is that of those who are already contemplatives—to the end that, after passing through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of the Divine union of the soul with God. Wherefore, to the end that we may the better understand and explain what night is this through which the soul passes, and for what cause God sets it therein, it will be well here to touch first of all upon certain characteristics of beginners ... in order that, realizing the weakness of the state wherein they are, they may take courage, and may desire that God will bring them into this night, wherein the soul is strengthened and confirmed in the virtues, and made ready for the inestimable delights of the love of God."

is much inferior and less fruitful, whereas infused prayer, as a work proper to the Holy Ghost, is effected without any effort and sometimes when it is least expected and it is always most profitable.

Since the Spirit breathes where He will, without our knowing whence He comes or whither He goes,[147] some receive this prayer very early and with great frequency, and others, more retarded souls, very late and at long intervals. But if souls do not correspond well, then even though they have experienced this prayer habitually, the Holy Ghost withdraws from them for a time, or for many years, or sometimes permanently. During these absences the loving soul which knows through experience the caresses of the Beloved, tries unceasingly to find Him in the streets and broad ways, that is to say, in the ordinary works of the active life, in every type of ascetical practice, but especially in prayer and frequent aspirations and introspections.[148]

The soul asks for Him from the keepers of the city, its spiritual directors, and if the soul is very perfect, then God, instead of consoling and directing the soul, will permit it to be tormented and despoiled of its veil of good reputation, disconcerting it and even discrediting it.[140] But if the soul remains faithful in seeking Him, it will not be long in finding Him in the flowery garden of its heart and will communicate itself to Him more than ever.[150] And when the soul is not yet strong enough to endure such trials, there will not be lacking those who will teach it how to find Him. "When I had a little passed by them, I found him whom my soul loveth." [151]

These absences and delays—at times definitive owing to lack of

147 John 3:8.

148 Tauler, *Institutions,* chap. 23: "When we find ourselves obliged to be engaged in exterior things, we must return to the interior as soon as possible. . . . This introspection should be made with all one's efforts . . . and with the whole soul. Since it is so excellent and so profitable, who can explain it? If it were possible to renew it a thousand times a day, each time there would issue forth new light, new purity, new grace and new virtue."

149 See Canticle of Canticles, 5:7. "The Word," says St. Magdalen of Pazzi (*Œuvres,* I, 4), "was despoiled of His garments and the same thing happens to the soul when it is prevented from walking in the way of God according to its interior inspiration and the lights which He communicates to it and is obliged to follow another direction. And in the example of the Word, the soul despoils itself of self when it preserves its humility and works contrary to its own opinion." See St. Thomas, *In Cant., loc. cit.*

100 Cant. 6: i f.

151 Cant. 3:4.

fidelity and diligence in seeking Him—have made souls believe that He communicates Himself mystically only to certain privileged persons and not to others, however good they may be. But such souls should examine their consciences well and consider their weakness and infidelities, their deafness to divine inspirations, their slothfulness and lack of perseverance during obscurities in seeking Him on the couch of prayer and, when unable to find Him in prayer, calling at the same time on works of charity and mercy.[152] Having done this, they will understand that if they are not numbered in the small group of the chosen ones, it is not because they do not belong to the many who have been called, for all those who thirst have been called.[153]

So the true ascetical life tends of itself to the mystical life as to its flower and crowning. There is a gradual transition from the one to the other. The faithful ascetic, under the unconscious or unexpected impulses of the divine consoler, practices the mystical acts more and more until, purified in the shadow of Him whom it desires, that Wisdom does not enter into a malicious soul nor dwell in a body subject to sin,[154] manifests itself clearly and brings the soul into the storerooms and even to the wine cellar to set in order charity in the soul.[155] When this infused prayer begins, the mystical and the ascetical states are intermingled and at times fused until in the prayer of union the mystical state predominates, in the espousal it becomes habitual, and later it becomes permanent.

But that which is noted clearly and positively in the prayer of recollection was already indicated amid the contrary effects of the night which preceded it and prepared for it just as it will again be noted in the obscurities, aridities, desolations, bitterness, fears, trials, and other painful and extraordinary sensations which follow it. It is precisely in these conditions that the soul usually performs heroic acts which, as true fruits of the divine Spirit, testify to the presence of His gifts. Here the soul exercises fortitude, piety, counsel, and fear, and it gathers from them the fruits of patience, loganimity, faith, continence, goodness, meekness, and so on. They lead the soul to joy amid tribulations, to peace amid contradictions and

152 Cant. 3:1 f.
153 Isa. 55:1-9; John 7:37; Apoc. 22:17.
154Wisd. 1:4.
165 Cant. 1:3; 2:4.

struggles, and to true chastity, modesty, and benignity and, finally, to perfect charity which casts out all servile fear. Thereby the soul attains a higher degree of the gift of knowledge, learning in its trials to know God better, seeing His paternal hand even in the most subtle malice of creatures, and acquiring a new hunger and thirst for justice. It also possesses in a higher degree the gift of understanding by which through the darkness it discovers and penetrates the divine secrets. Finally, there is an increase of the gift of wisdom which formerly saturated the soul with salutary bitterness in order to purify it and enable it to taste the ineffable sweetness of the God of all consolation.

Thus, what is truly characteristic of the mystical state, either in act or in habit, is the superhuman mode which is realized and recognized: in *prayer,* by some special manifestation of the lights and affections produced through the various gifts of the Holy Ghost; in *operation,* by some noticeable acquisition of the twelve fruits; in *knowledge* and *volition,* by some positive or negative, pleasing or displeasing, function of the spiritual senses and sentiments; that is, of the various conscious forms of the *sensus Christi* which make us perceive, appreciate, love, and desire God ineffably.[158] There are also other special manifestations of the gifts of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, and so on. In all this the soul manifests itself as directed and moved by the Holy Ghost, proceeding in a superhuman manner under the divine initiative and according to divine norms; in the ascetical state the soul proceeds humanly, under the government of reason itself, more or less Christianized, and as if by its own initiative.[167]

Sometimes the soul believes that it does not feel God, that it does not appreciate Him, love Him, or follow His impulses, and all this because of the aridity, bitterness, and difficulties which it encounters. But it does feel at least the painful emptiness of His absence, an ardent thirst for His love, and the painful awareness of its own ugliness and weakness by means of the secret divine light which discloses these things. What is essential is some special motion or illumination of the Paraclete, although it may be so dis-

158 "Mystical theology," says Ven. John of Saint-Samson (*Maximes,* chap. 21), "is the ineffable perception of God."

167 Cf. *op. cit.,* chap. 3.

simulated that it will hardly be noticed. Nevertheless it will be accepted and felt as a kind of interior touch which is most spiritual, and, however much the soul may believe that it is not experiencing it, it is working under its influence unconsciously. Thus, under the secret touch of God, the soul sometimes finds itself moved and directed without knowing how or whence. It is moved to love or fear intensely, but it knows not why.[158]

So it is that many mystics speak with full conviction that sometimes they love without understanding, and all mystics in general maintain at the very least that love goes much farther than knowledge and exceeds it beyond compare.[159] Meanwhile purely speculative theologians, not understanding these mysteries, reply to this by invoking the axiom: *Nihil volitum, quin praecognitum.*[160] But here the one who knows is the Holy Ghost, who breathes where He will and without our knowing where He goes; who pours His divine charity into our hearts in order to inflame them with His sweet fire, without our being aware of it. He pleads for us with unspeakable groanings for that for which we know not how to ask.[161] The greater part of His ordinary inspirations are realized

168 "Holy inspiration," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Genoa (*Dialogues,* III, 13), "never fails to accompany the ray of love by which I arouse hearts to love. So delicate is the mystical effect of this light that the heart which receives it cannot help but love although as yet it knows not precisely what it loves. But if it gives manifestations of that good will of which the angels sang at My entrance at Bethlehem, its growing faithfulness will disclose My secrets to it little by little. . . . If men follow the impression which attracts them to My uncreated light, they are made blind to everything earthly and they lose sight of all earthly things. . . . Not only do I make those rays of light touch the heart of man, but I cast them like flaming arrows which pierce and burn and make them ardently long for Me. . . . Man does not yet know what I desire, but the wound of love which he bears within himself places him in a holy fear which is converted into a fervent desire and makes him ascend from grade to grade . . . up to the very throne of fire whence proceeds the great voice: 'Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them'" (Apoc. 21:3). See also Dan. 7.

159 See St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* VI, 4. *Dark Night,* II, 13: "It is more usual for the touch of the enkindling of love to be felt in the will than for the touch of intelligence to be felt in the understanding." In his exposition of the third stanza of the *Dark Night,* St. John of the Cross sets down as one of the properties of the spiritual night that the soul journeys with no other guide or light but its love which burns and moves it and makes it soar upwards towards its God.

100 "Nothing is willed unless previously known."

161 Spiritual Canticle, stanza 26: "Here it is to be known, with respect to the saying of some that the will cannot love, save what the understanding first understands, that this has to be understood after a natural manner; for in the way of nature it is impossible to love if one understands not first that which one is to love; but in the supernatural way God can readily infuse love and increase it with-

unconsciously, working as if by instinct; that is, by a true divine instinct, as St. Thomas calls it. The soul feels moved by a vivid desire without knowing why, and many times it works without having more than a vague idea of the object proposed.[162] So our working well ultimately reduces itself to letting ourselves be carried by that sweet breathing and cooperating faithfully and without the least resistance with the mysterious impulse which we experience for the supreme good.

This sensation of the divine is what makes us recognize ourselves

out infusing or increasing distinct knowledge. . . . And this is the experience of many spiritual persons, who oftentimes find themselves burning in the love of God without having a more distinct knowledge of Him than aforetime; for they can understand little and love much, and they can understand much and love little. But habitually those spiritual persons who have not a very excellent understanding concerning God are wont to excel in will; and infused faith suffices them in the stead of intellectual knowledge; by means of which faith God infuses into them charity, and increases it within them, together with the act thereof, which is to love more, even though their knowledge be not increased, as we have said. And thus the will can drink of love without the understanding drinking anew of knowledge."

Álvarçz de Paz, *De inquisit. pads,* Bk. 4, Part III, chap. 8: "Many of those who state that love is experienced without knowledge are very learned men. . . . By experience they acquire more concerning the nature and quality of internal acts than any philosopher ever acquires, even though he should be well versed in the schools. And they see that these things are to be admired and seized, as it were, by the hands, which things the inexperienced deem illusions. . . . Therefore those spiritual men who are such explorers and investigators of internal acts assert without any fear that they know these things through experience, for they love God without any knowledge which precedes or aids their love. God touches the very summit of the will and unites it to Himself by a most ardent love. . . . Indeed St. Thomas speaks only of the natural and common way of loving and perhaps, if asked about supernatural love, he would not deny it."

162 Father A. Mercier, "Les actes surnaturelles," *Revue Thomiste,* March, 1907, p. 56: "The supernatural life of man here below is greatly instinctive and subconscious. . . . In particular the gifts of the Holy Ghost are almost purely instinctive, analogous to natural instincts, but they operate with a certainty and power far superior to conscious perception of the motives of the divine order to which they correspond. These motives are known and desired by God, who opportunely moves the soul, and the acts realized by His motion are so much the more supernatural as their motives are more exclusively divine. . . . The true motives of human actions are oftentimes hidden and far removed from the consciousness of him who works. So it can happen that under certain facts of natural appearance which prompt our determinations there is hidden a special motion of God; just as, on the contrary, it can happen—and all too frequently does happen—that believing we are working for supernatural motives, we actually work for other motives that are quite different."

"Just as our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them" (William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 242).

as partakers with all the faithful, so that we personally and truly grieve over their spiritual losses and rejoice in their gains. We note, though unconsciously, that they pertain in some way to the whole organism of the mystical body in which any experience of any member constitutes a true progress.[163] From this proceeds the mutual and mysterious influence of one on the other and the fact that in the measure that the union of charity and holy solidarity increase among many, there is also increased in them as Moehler notes,[164] illumination, so that they are much better able to know the Head together than they would separately. From this it also follows that certain great saints, even though they had never met before, readily recognized each other and contracted intimate spiritual friendships. They are organs which form a part of the most pure heart of the Church wherein the Holy Guest dwells in a singular manner, finding His delight there and pouring forth the torrent of His graces so that through these organs, as through a network whose mesh extends throughout the whole w'orld, He may seek and captivate another multitude of souls. Hence, in the measure that the perfection of a Christian increases, so also does his charity and solidarity with all Christians grow. He feels himself more bound to them as a member of Christ and is much more vitally interested in each one of his neighbors.[165] He has a greater influence on the common good and he contributes in an extraordinary manner to the edification of the Church of Christ in charity and to the evolution of the Church in all the forms of its progressive development.

APPENDIX

i. Divine Inspirations and Spiritual Deafness

Fénelon, *Sentiments de pieté; La parole intérieure:*

It is certain that the Spirit of God dwells within us; that He works and pleads without ceasing; that He groans and begs and desires what we do

163 Cf. Weiss, *Apologie,* IX, 3.

164 *L'unité dans l'Eglise,* p. 129.

165 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* III, chap. 5: "Just as the Word is by nature so communicative that He gives to us whatever He has, so grace makes the soul so communicative that it pours forth on others what it receives from heaven and it would even wish to give itself for the salvation of its neighbor."

not know how to ask for; that He moves us, animates us, speaks to us in silence, suggests to us all truth, and unites us to Himself in such a way that we become one spirit with God. This is what faith teaches us and what even the doctors farthest removed from the interior life must recognize. . . . We are, then, always inspired, but we continually stifle this inspiration. God does not cease to speak, but the noise of creatures from without and of our passions from within deafen us and prevent us from hearing Him. One must hush creatures and silence oneself in order to hear in the silence of the soul the ineffable voice of God. One must listen attentively because His voice is soft and delicate and is not heard except by those who can no longer hear anything else. How rare it is for the soul to be silent enough as to let God speak! The least murmur of our vain desires and self-love muffles all the words of the divine Spirit. We realize that He is speaking and asking something, but we do not know what He is saying and sometimes we do not wish to find out. The least resistance, the least fear that the Lord is asking of us more than we are ready to give, is sufficient to obscure the interior word. Why should it be strange, then, that so many pious persons who are filled with affections, vain desires, and self-confidence cannot hear Him and even look upon His words as a chimera? . . . It is certain that we do not live the life of grace except in the measure of that interior inspiration. But how few Christians experience it, because there are so many who smother it by their voluntary dissipation or resistance!

Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* IV, III, 3:

It is asked, why the generality of religious and of devout persons who lead a tepid life form so few acts of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, since, as they are in a state of grace, they possess them.

The answer is, that this proceeds from their keeping them, as it were, bound down by contrary habits and affections, and that the numerous venial sins which they commit every day shut out those graces which are necessary in order to produce acts of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God refuses them the succour of his graces, because he foresees that if he bestowed them upon them in their present disposition, they would be of no use to them, their will being bound with a thousand chains which would prevent their yielding their consent.

When we have lived a long time in such tepidity, performing at the same time, nevertheless, many good works, the way of escaping from it is to cultivate purity of heart; this is the surest road. The devil lays no snares therein, for it is impossible he should prompt souls to purify themselves.

Let us apply ourselves in earnest and without intermission to this holy exercise, with a will determined to refuse God nothing which he asks of us in order to lead us to a higher perfection; thus we should be the sooner delivered from those chains which render the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit within us of no avail, and shall behold ourselves enriched with their fullness.

It is astonishing to see so many religious, who, after having lived in a state of grace some forty or fifty years, saying Mass every day, and practising all the holy exercises of the religious life, and consequently possessing the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a very high material degree, and corresponding with that sort of perfection in grace which theologians call *gradual* or physical increase—it is astonishing, I say, to see these religious displaying nothing of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their actions and in their conduct; their life is wholly natural; when they are blamed or disobliged, they show their resentment at it; they exhibit so much eagerness for the praises, the esteem, and the applauses of the world; they take so much pleasure in them, and are so fond of their own comfort, and seek it so carefully, as well as everything that flatters self-love.

There is no ground for astonishment in all this; the venial sins which they continually commit keep the gifts of the Holy Spirit tied up, as it were; so that it is no wonder that the effects are not visible in them. True it is that these gifts increase, like charity, habitually and in their physical being, but not actually, and in that perfection which answers to the fervour of charity, and adds to our merit; because venial sins being opposed to the fervour of charity, consequently prevent the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If these religious cultivated purity of heart, the fervour of charity would increase in them more and more, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost would shine out in their whole conduct. But while they live in this way, without recollection or attention to their own interior, letting themselves follow the bent of their own inclinations, avoiding only the most grievous sins and neglecting little things, these gifts will never be very manifest in them.

It is past all conception, says St. Lawrence Justinian, how our heart becomes filled with sins unless we take care to be continually cleansing it. It is a filthy ditch which always requires emptying. The most spiritual and most perfect are not free from this defect, but ever feel the infirmities and wounds of corrupted nature, which are never entirely cured.

The reason why we are so illuminated by the lights of the Holy Spirit, and so little guided by the motions of his gifts, is, that our soul is sensual beyond measure, and full of a multitude of earthly thoughts, desires, and

affections, which extinguish within us the Spirit of God. Few give themsclve·. wholly to God and abandon themselves to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, so that he alone may live in them and be the principle of all their actions.

As all who are in a state of grace possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they sometimes make acts of the same; but it is only, as it were, in passing, and so rapidly that they are scarcely aware of them. Thus they remain ever in the same state, without sharing the bounty of the Holy Spirit, owing to the opposition he meets with in them.

See also Agreda, *Mystical City of God,* Part I, Bk. II, chap. 13, no. no.

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* Part I, chap. 30:

"O eternal Word, grant that I may know the obstacles which impede Thy Spirit, so fruitful and active, from fully realizing His work in souls. He is so sweet and lovable. How is it that His gentle operations are known to so few?" . . . "Those obstacles, My dear spouse, are as varied as they are serious, because of the various states in which creatures find themselves. . . . Some are separated from Me because the malice which fills their hearts is an obstacle which prevents My Spirit from resting in them. In some souls the obstacle is their self-will; in others it is not only self-will but also their opinions and natural prudence and the notion they have that they can serve Me as they please. Others desire My Spirit but they wish Him in a way that suits them and when it fits their convenience and thus they make themselves inapt to receive Him. Others, who are closer to Me, place an obstacle which is no less disagreeable to Me than the preceding: the cursed lukewarmness which makes them believe that they serve Me while actually, though they realize it not, they live only for themselves."

On one occasion the Lord complained to a certain religious, says Tauler *(Institutions,* p. 28), and enumerated six faults by which His friends usually annoy Him:

"The first is that although they do not seek consolation in anything apart from Me, they do not lament with Me alone over all their adversities and labors so that I, who desire to be their only support, may console them. The second is that when they gather together they speak vainly about many things but hardly ever mention My name. The third is that when I come to them to fill their heart, their soul, and their senses with Myself, with all delight and love, I find them so occupied and distracted, embroiled in so many things and painted images, that I am compelled to

leave at once. The fourth is that beneath the religious habit they serve Me in a delicate, false, and tepid manner, for there are few who follow Me with love and a pure intention. Each one, though he dissimulates, seeks in Me his own profit and cherishes his own honor rather than Mine. The fifth is that they do not wish to serve Me at their expense, but it is necessary to buy their fidelity, either by consoling them or granting them something; and when these remunerations cease, all their solicitude and diligence fade away. The sixth is that in offering unceasingly to their hearts all My love and consolation and gifts and goods, and exhorting them to desire to receive Me poor and begging but as a faithful counselor, they pay hardly any attention to Me. They love not Me, but My gifts, and it is those that they seek. Not realizing the ardent love I have for them, they do themselves indescribable harm."

2. Why Does God Prefer the Little Ones?

Weiss, *Apologie,* IX, 3:

It avails us little that God give to us His Spirit with His gifts if we do not accept them humbly and piously. Since our pride and coldness are obstacles to receiving them, the Lord bestows them on the little ones. . . . Then the vanity of the wise, wounded to the quick, is accustomed to say that it is always the good women and the simple religious who possess such lights. These recriminations are not new, . . . but neither is the reply: "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sin" (Wisd. 1:4). Because the little ones, the women, the virginal souls, have a heart more pure, or more generously do violence to their passions, the Holy Ghost can make His light shine forth in them. The words of the sixth beatitude: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8) here find their application in this life. Therefore ordinary men and great geniuses have no reason to accuse women for that, but rather they have good reason to accuse themselves. It is not an exclusive privilege of the little ones and women to see supernatural things better, but it is a castigation for men and the wise so that they may be humbled. And if it does not effect that, at least it puts them in great confusion, as the Savior said to St. Catherine of Siena. . . . St. Teresa asked our Lord that instead of bestowing such favors on her He should dispense them to wise men, priests, religious, and theologians. But He answered her: "These have neither the time nor the inclination to pursue relations of confidence with Me. Since they always disdain Me, I must direct Myself to simple women if I would have the consolation of treating of My interests with men."

3. All Could Arrive at Contemplation if They Would Renounce Self and All Earthly Consolations to Devote Themselves to the Imitation of Christ and the Motion of His Spirit; but Few Arrive at This State Because Few Do These Things

Blessed Angela de Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 57:

Truly there is no other way open to the sons of God; there is no other means of finding Him and possessing Him, than the life and death of Christ crucified. This is what I call the book of life. It can be read only by continual prayer which illumines the soul and elevates and transforms it. The soul illumined with the light of prayer sees clearly the path of Jesus prepared and marked with the feet of the Crucified. . . . To know God and to know oneself, this is . . . all perfection and all good. . . . But this manifestation is made only to the legitimate sons of God, to the sons of prayer and the fervent readers of the book of life. . . . There one drinks the science which does not puff up and all truth necessary for oneself and for others.

Imitation of Christ, Bk. II, chap. 1; Bk. III, chap. 31: "Learn to contemn external things and to dedicate thyself to interior things, and thou wilt see how the kingdom of God will come to thee. . . . Therefore are there so few contemplatives because there are so few who are completely detached from creatures."

Surin, *Catéch.,* I, chap. 3: "The fact that there are so few who arrive at contemplation proceeds from the fact that there are also very few who flee earthly consolations to devote themselves to mortification and the exercise of the Christian virtues."

Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* II, chap. 11:

The divine action incites souls to aim at the most eminent sanctity; all that is required on the part of the soul is abandonment to this action. It is only from want of knowing how to make use of the divine action that so many Christians pass their lives in anxiously pursuing a multitude of methods which might prove useful if ordained by this divine action, but which by preventing a simple union with it, become positively harmful. All this multiplicity fails to impart that which can only be found in the principle of all life, that which is continually present with us, and which stamps each of its tools with a character of its own and makes it work with an incomparable fitness. Jesus is sent to us as a Master to whom we

cio not sufficiently attend. He speaks to every heart, and to each 11. : the word of life, the only word applicable to us, but we do not he. We want to know what He has said to others and do not listen when Hi speaks to ourselves. We do not sufficiently regard things as having been supernaturalized by the divine action. . . . Yes, divine Love! to what heights of supernatural, sublime, admirable and incomparable virtue would all souls arrive if they would but be satisfied with Your action! Yes, if they would leave the matter in this divine hand they would attain to an eminent degree of perfection! Everyone would arrive at it because it is offered to all. . . . Every soul possesses in You an infinitely perfect model, and by your action which works ceaselessly to this end, is rendered like this model. If all souls were faithful copies of this divine example they would all speak, act, and live divinely. They would not require to copy each other, but would be singled out by the divine influence, and each would be rendered unique by the most simple and ordinary things.

Blosius, *Institutio spiritualis,* chap. 12:

Few there are who rise above their own strength and arrive at the knowledge of simple intelligence, the peak of the spirit, and the hidden depths of the soul. Rather, it is difficult to convince them that it exists . . . this simple and uniform depth where the kingdom of God is within us. But when it is discovered, radiating as always the uncreated light, it greatly impresses and enchants them. Oh, most illustrious depth wherein the Trinity abides and wherein is tasted eternity itself! One perfect conversion to God in this state avails more than many pious exercises and good works and can repair the time lost for ten years or more. For there springs forth the fount of water which springs to life eternal and it is of such sweetness and efficacy that it readily destroys the bitterness of vice and quiets rebellious nature. As soon as it is drunk it is diffused through the whole soul and body, giving them a marvelous purity and elegance. We ought not, then, cease our prayer until we merit to drink at that fountain. For when we shall have drunk a single drop we shall have no more thirst for vain and perishable things, but for God alone and His love. And the more we grow in that love, the more shall we progress in the divine union; and the more perfectly united we are to God and the more perfectly submerged in Him, so much the more clearly shall we know God in Himself and through Himself; and finally, the better we know Him, with the more ardor will we love Him. Some sooner and some later, arriving at that stream of living water, are remarkably illumined with the supernatural light. Some God carries

quickly' to perfection; and as they advance toward Him, He draws them to Himself with such vehemence that they cannot resist Him. But happy is he who after many years of labor and effort at digging, finally merits to discover at the depth of the soul the stream of living water. Here is found the object and end of all spiritual exercises, all the Scriptures, and all the commandments.

Interior Castle, second mansions, chap, i:

Let them place their trust, not in themselves, but in the mercy of God, and they will see how His Majesty can lead them on from one group of mansions to another. As to those who lead Christian lives, the saint continues (third mansions, chap, i): "There seems no reason why they should be denied entrance to the very last of the mansions; nor will the Lord deny them this if they desire it. . . . This is a very good beginning; and, if we persevere in it, instead of going back, even if only in desire . . . there is no doubt that, by persevering in this detachment and abandonment of everything, we shall attain our object." In the fourth mansions, chap. 2, the saint adds: "You will desire, then, my daughters, to strive to attain this way of prayer, and you will be right to do so. . . . It is certainly desirable that we should know how to obtain this favor. . . . As well as acting, then, as do those who have dwelt in the mansions already described, have humility, and again humility. It is by humility that the Lord allows Himself to be conquered so that He will do all we ask of Him. . . . I am sure that if any of us achieve true humility and detachment . . . the Lord will not fail to grant us this favor, and many others which we shall not even know how to desire." Cf. fifth mansions, chap. 1; *Way of Perfection,* chap. 10.

Finally, in the seventh mansions, chap. 2, St. Teresa states:

For it is quite certain that, when we empty ourselves of all that is creature and rid ourselves of it for the love of God, that same Lord will fill our souls with Himself. Thus, one day, when Jesus Christ was praying for His apostles . . . He asked that they might become one with the Father and with Him, even as Jesus Christ our Lord is in the Father and the Father is in Him. I do not know what greater love there can be than this. And we shall none of us fail to be included here, for His Majesty went on to say: "Not for them alone do I pray, but also for all who believe in Me"; and again: "I am in them."

Oh, God help me! How true are these words and how well the soul understands them, for in this state it can actually see their truth for itself. And how well we should all understand them were it not for our own

fault! The words of Jesus Christ our King and Lord cannot f
because we ourselves fail by not preparing ourselves and departing
all that can shut out this light, we do not see ourselves in this mirror into which we are gazing and in which our image is engraved.

St. Teresa also states that all of us, if we dispose ourselves as we ought, can reach this high grade of prayer to which she refers, which is nothing less than the spiritual marriage.

St. John of the Cross exclaims in the *Spiritual Canticle* (chap. 30): "O souls created for these grandeurs and called thereto! What do ye do? Wherein do ye occupy yourselves?"

Molina, *De la Oration,* trat. II, chap. 6:

> The goal and terminus of mental prayer is contemplation. . . . All should strive for it as far as they are able. . . . Generally it is given after a man has faithfully persevered for a long time in mental prayer and mortification. . . . This grace is so great and so excellent, of such high esteem, that it cannot be too greatly valued or exaggerated. . . . Nor will it ever be possible for one who hast not experienced it to esteem it as it deserves. This is the wisdom of which Solomon speaks (Wisd. 7), that it is to be preferred to kingdoms and riches and is to be esteemed more than health, beauty, honor, and power. All the gold, silver, or precious stones or all the riches of the world in comparison with it are but a little clay; but together with it, all good things come to the soul. The sweetness and delight which the soul receives from it, says St. Thomas (Ila Ilae, q. 180, a. 7) exceed all delights as greatly as does the spirit the body. Actually, it is to live in the mortal flesh the life of the angels, a life similar to that of the blessed. . . . From what has been said, it follows that anyone who leads a life of prayer ought to arouse a vivid and generous desire and a great determination to do whatever is possible and not to rest until he has received this mercy of God who is prepared to grant it to all who dispose themselves. He is no acceptor of persons, and His hand is not shortened so that the mercies which He granted to His saints and which He now grants to many of His servants He would not offer to all who do all in their power. . . . Never lose the hope and desire of attaining it nor the zeal to do all that lies on your part. Many times God delays in granting it for reasons which He alone knows; but when it comes late, He repays one so abundantly that He makes up for all that has been endured in waiting for it. . . . The soul should have the desire of passing much higher, . . . for however high the grade in which God has placed it, . . . there are other grades even higher to which it can reach and

other mercies more excellent which it can receive . . . and when it receives them it will seem to the soul that those received previously were nothing by comparison, for in this there is no limit or measure as long as they are in this life. Since God is the infinite good, He has an infinite variety of ways of communicating Himself to His creatures, some higher and more excellent than others. For these desires it is of profit to read books which treat of the modes of supernatural prayer. . . . I believe it to be certain it will be denied to no one who perseveres in doing all he can.

4. The Grades of Prayer

To pray is to converse with God, entering into fellowship with Him by means of faith, hope, charity, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. *Vocal prayer,* in which that conversation is carried on by means of the customary symbols of language, is within the reach of all and it constitutes the *first grade* of prayer. There are some persons who, to manifest their sentiments to the Lord, can seldom do so without words.

There are others who pray better with only the heart, whose affections and desires God hears very well without any need of verbal expression, and this conversation or *mental prayer,* which is usually done more in spirit and in truth, constitutes the *second grade.* Here, however, there arc ordinarily required certain preparatory acts of composition of place, reading, meditation, reflection, and so on, which are instructions, as it were, so that later one may know how to converse with affections, supplications, resolutions, thanksgiving, and the like, in which consists the essence of prayer.

But when the soul knows well how to do this and does so with facility and without need of an apprenticeship, it should rest from these acts and attend to what is essential. So the Holy Ghost, as Master of all truth, incapacitates the soul so that it will not waste time in preparatory steps which are now useless, as would be those used in search of the fountain when the soul is already there and needs only to take of the water. This is the beginning of the mystical state as is also the fervor which comes when the Holy Ghost breathes and inflames the soul with love or moves it to pray or work according to His pleasure. Since these affections and supplications are essential, if they are lacking there is no true prayer;

iiiul one of them well observed, although nothing else is done, constitutes a very good prayer. This *affective prayer,* or that of the nets of virtue as some call it, in which it is now difficult or impossible to meditate, is what constitutes the *third grade.*

When therein is found great aridity, in which there is experienced no affection or resolution, the soul must again arouse itself with reflections, meditations, or brief readings. But if these things are forgotten and there is no means of reflection, we must strive to repeat some pious affection which is most suitable to us and which has been previously prepared or we should use the Our Father and the like. And if even this fails and there is no capacity for saying a single thing, and at the same time there is a hidden desire to remain silent before God, then the soul remains in that sweet loving presence, without arousing its faculties so that its peace will not be disturbed. In that state the heart speaks only its mute language and it listens to what God speaks within itself in its heart, for God then is secretly suggesting to it all truth and teaching it to remain in that calm of the passions and senses so that it can attend only to what He desires of it and learn to do in all things what is most in conformity with His divine good pleasure. Such is the *fourth grade of prayer,* which some call the *prayer of simplicity* and others the simple loving vision and which is really more infused contemplation than it is ordinary prayer. For the divine Spirit is then working, moving, and inspiring in silence by means of His gifts of fear, piety, knowledge, fortitude, and counsel.

But that those gifts may develop and work freely and that through them the superior gifts may be more clearly manifested, that is, the gifts of understanding and wisdom, there is required the purgation of the night of the senses and a part of the purgation of the night of the spirit. This must be done because the inferior lights must be extinguished so that there can shine forth and be perceived the superior lights. The sun must be hidden in order to see the stars which are high in the heavens. That illumination which, by means of the gifts, so purifies, inflames, elevates, and strengthens the faculties and enables them to converse with God in a truly heavenly and divine manner, begins to be had manifestly in the *prayer of recollection* and even more so in the *prayer of quiet* and that of the *conforming union;* and finally, beyond all compare better and al

most continually in the *transforming union*. This is the mystical repose to which all are invited and where alone is given to us to find true rest for our souls.

Once anyone enters fully into the mystical state and has perfect docility, human instructions are laid aside, for in that state the Holy Ghost Himself is the director, governor, and master of the soul. With His unction He gives vigor and He illumines the soul, giving it a discernment and facility for all things, filling the heart with light and holy joy and also with fortitude and life.

What is of great importance is that the soul abandon itself totally and without reserve; that it confidently place itself in His divine hands and that with all fidelity and constancy it persevere always in abandonment and self-annihilation. It strives to correspond with generous magnanimity to the divine gifts, letting itself be led without any resistance by the holy motions and illuminations, and to be molded by the secret action of the divine renewer and vivifier. The more blindly and the freer from resistance the soul gives itself to Him, so much the better; with less effort and more quickly the soul is reformed, refined, illumined, and vivified and finally transfigured from clarity to clarity in the divine image of the incarnate Word, and becomes one spirit with Him.

Part Three

MYSTICAL EVOLUTION OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH

CHAPTER X

Integral Life and Collective Evolution

sSSssSSssssSssSSssSSsSS&sSSsSSSssSSsSSSSsSSSssssSssSSssSSsSSrfS&sSSsSSsSSSssSSssssssSSssS&sSSsSS&sSSs

THE Church is the vastest, most complex, and in every way the most admirable of all living organisms. As the mystical society of all the Christian faithful it enjoys a real and true life and not merely a moral life as do merely human societies, because it has Jesus Christ as its Head and His divine Spirit as its soul. The Church evolves in a prodigious manner both in doctrine and organization for, like Jesus, it grows in age and wisdom. All its doctrinal, disciplinary, and organic progress is ordained to mystical growth, to the increase of grace and sanctification, or rather, to the augmentation of the supernatural life which the divine Paraclete is continually imparting to it so that it may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

Pure doctrine, however lofty it may be, if it lacks the spirit which vivifies, is an empty word and a dead letter which often kills.[1] Likewise all the sciences, human and divine together, if not inspired and informed by charity, are vain fantasies and fickle wind. They puff up, but they do not edify, much less vivify.[2] But the Spirit

1 II Cor. 3:6.

2 See I Cor. 8:1; St. Augustine, *Confessions,* V, 23; *Imitation of Christ,* I, 1-3. "Do not seek progress in empty knowledge. A progress which consists in a better knowledge of what is good and just, but which does not make one more faithful in the fulfillment of duty, deserves the name of retrogression rather than progress. Knowledge alone does not make a man better; it does no more than aggravate his sin and increase his responsibility and his chastisement (Luke 12:47)." (Weiss, *Apologie,* X, 18.)

IIa IIae, q.82, a.3, ad 3: "Science and anything else conducive to greatness, is to man an occasion of self-confidence, so that he does not wholly surrender himself to God. ... If, however, a man perfectly submits to God his science or any other perfection, by this very fact his devotion is increased."

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* VI, 4: "Of itself, knowledge is not opposed to

vivifies and charity edifies. Without the Spirit, who diflfuses the charity of God throughout the organism, the organism itself would be useless. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing." [3] Therefore, "unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." [4]

When the various members of the mystical body of the Church have been vivified, animated, and quickened by the Spirit of Jesus and when they have been developed, edified, adapted, correlated, subordinated, and consolidated by charity, the Church as a whole grows and develops. In this consists its mystical evolution and and progress.

Vital Solidarity of the Christian Faithful

Together with the Church, we can also say that Jesus Christ Himself evolves and increases as the invisible Head who diffuses His power to all the members and is incorporated in them and formed in them. We can also say that in a certain manner the Holy Ghost evolves and expands in the Church, as the soul which vivifies it, as He gradually manifests and lets shine forth His divine energy, making more rich and abundant the diffusion of His gifts in the measure that the particular members become more numerous and robust and are diversified, adapted, and made more apt and worthy.[5] [8]

As the Church grows, progresses, and luxuriantly develops, we can say that Jesus Christ also progresses anew in it "in wisdom, in age, and in grace before God and men." And as that same Church is matured, fully developed, and filled with vigor and life, variety and beauty, we can say that it is Jesus Christ Himself fully grown and perfect,® extending to us His beneficent activitiy, prolonging His stay on earth, and performing through His ministers and all the faithful, as through so many organs, all the functions and works of

devotion; rather, it is very useful to it, and if the two are joined together they aid each other remarkably. But through our weakness it often happens that knowledge impedes the birth of devotion by filling men with pride and haughtiness."

3 John 6:64.

4 Ps. 126:1.

6 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, 33: "By enlarging our hearts, O Lord, Thou hast given the Holy Ghost the power to extend Himself in us, since He now finds a container sufficiently ample and capable of receiving His gifts and favors."

8 Eph. 1:23.

His redemptive mission. Such is the doctrine of the Apostle, St. Paul.[7]

But just as the soul is at the same time wholly in the entire body and whole in each of its parts, so also the Spirit of Jesus, who animates the Church, is entire in each living member of the Church. As long as the members do not resist Him, He refashions them into the image of the divine Model. He thus enables each one to put on Jesus Christ that Christ be formed in them (Gal. 4:19) and that each in his way will continue the mission of the Savior and complete His work, so that Christ works and suffers anew in each one and in all. For whatever is done or suffered in the supernatural order is done and suffered through the power and grace of the Redeemer and therefore it merits eternal life.[8]

[7] Bacuez *(Manuel biblique,* IV, no. 587) makes this interesting resume of the ecclesiology of St. Paul: "He represents the Church as a great body whose head is Christ and whose soul is His Spirit. . . . Between the Church and its Founder there is not only a moral relation, as exists between a prince and his subjects, but there is a real bond, an intimate connection, an active influence, an incessant communication, as exists between the body and the soul (II Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1). . . . For that reason he habitually calls the Church the mystical body of the Savior (Eph. 1:23) . . . and he calls Christians members of it or of Him (I Cor. 6:15; Eph. 1:22; 4:12-16; Rom. I2:4f.; I Cor. 6:15; 12:12). Thus considered in its totality, the Christian Church is Jesus Christ, grown, developed, complete, extending and perpetuating His life on earth (Eph. 1:23; 4:12). St. Paul repeatedly states that Christ is multiplied and that He resides and works in all the faithful (Gal. 2:19 f.; 3:27; Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:11) ... and that each one of the faithful serves Him to continue His mission. It is true that we are not united to the Word as was His humanity, hypostatically; nevertheless baptism unites us to His person and places us under His control. Christians are, so to speak, engrafted on Jesus Christ and incorporated in Him (Rom. 6:5; Gal. 3:28) ... in such wise that they participate in His life and that of His Spirit (Rom. 8:9-14; I Cor. 1:5, 30; 12:4-44; Eph. 3:17; Phil. 4:13). ... So the divine Spirit whose plenitude was received by the soul of the Savior becomes the Spirit of the Holy Church (John 1:16) ... and by pouring forth His light on us, penetrating us with His sentiments, and making His virtues rule in our hearts (I Cor. 3:t6f.; 6:11; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:4-7; 3:·8; Phil. 1:5) . . . He tends to become the soul of the human race, its higher and universal soul, for He is the supernatural life of all its members (I Cor. 2:12-16; Eph. 1:16-21; Col. 3:10-12). ... In this sense it can very rightly be said that Jesus Christ lives and dwells and prays in us (Eph. 3:17)."

[8] Hettinger, *Apolog.,* conf. 32: "As the history of the sons of Adam is the continuation of the history of sin, so the history of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is the history of Christ Flimself continuing His incarnation in each man in particular." Unfortunately, Christ is not able to grow and develop in all nor in the way He would desire, for there are many who resist the Spirit and are held back in the first stages of spiritual formation. "There are some," says St. Bernard *(Serm. 44),* "in whom Christ is not yet bom; some in whom He has not yet suffered; others in whom He has not yet risfen, and still others to whom He has not yet sent the Holy Ghost." But unless a person reproduces in himself all these mysteries, he will never be able to glory in being a perfect Christian. As St. Augustine says, "Whatever took place on the cross of Christ, in the tomb, in His resurrection on the third day,

All work pleasing to God and all the means of realizing it, says St. Gertrude,® come only from Jesus Christ and His grace. With His grace we do all that we are able to do as if they were His own works, and God accepts them as such. Certain actions of man can be very good and honorable; but only if they are performed in intimate union with those of Jesus Christ do they have infinite value in the eyes of God.

"When a living member of the mystical body of Jesus Christ," observes Weiss,[10] "performs a good work with the power which he receives from the Head, then that is a work of the Head performed through that member and, as the work of the Redeemer, it greatly increases the treasure of merits which He acquired for us during His holy life on earth. Just as the effects of the Redemption did not cease with the life of Christ on earth, so neither is the treasure of His merits replenished solely with what He realized while living in the flesh, but it is always increasing with what He continues to suffer in His members. The Head did what was His to do; the members must effect that which falls to their part.[11] Truly it is Jesus Christ who does all things but He does not do them all personally. Some things He did while He lived on earth, but the rest He effects through His members here below. But for Him there is no difference, so intimately is He joined by love to this body. Thus He places the merits of His members in the same treasury with His own as if they were all one."

From this accumulation of merits comes the marvelous condescension which holy mother the Church manifests toward sinners, reconciling them in virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of penance as often as they truly seek it and even remitting the satisfaction (which usually is nothing at all when compared to public penance in the early Church) by virtue of the many indulgences which they can so readily gain. These indulgences consist precisely in the application of the superabundant satisfactory merits of the saints, together with those of the Savior and the Blessed Virgin, to

in His ascension into heaven and His sitting at the right hand of the Father, was done so that the Christian life might be mystically configured not only in words but in deeds" (*Enchirid.*, 14). See also Olier, *Catéch. chrét.*, 1, chaps. 20-25.

[9] *Legatus divinae piet.*, pp. 4, 9, 13, 34, 44.

[10] *Apolog.*, X, 16.

[11] St. Augustine, *In Ps.* 86:5; 100:3; 122:1; *In Serm.* 261, 14.

the needy faithful, for all are members of the one body and thus some can in great measure supply and satisfy for others.[12]

Hence Christ considers as done by Himself the least work performed by His servants, and all their works and sufferings He reckons as His own and He complains at being persecuted in them.[13] The blood of the martyrs is His blood flowing anew. "These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and they have made them white in the blood of the Lamb."[14] Christ Himself, in the person of his vicar, St. Peter, is crucified again: "I go to Rome to be crucified again." Therefore he who hears His ministers who are charged to speak in His name; His martyrs, who give testimony of His truth and power; or His confessors and virgins, who bear witness to His holiness and purity, for the glory of God, hears Him; and he who despises these, despises Him.[15] With even greater reason, he who hears the Church and is united to it, hears and is united to Jesus Christ; but if not, he denies Christ and is separated from Him.[16]

Hence heretics and schismatics, who refuse to hear the Church, are necessarily separated from Jesus Christ. To desire to be united directly with Him without being a subordinated part of His mystical body, is folly. The amputated member is no longer in com-

12 St. Catherine de Ricci suffered terribly for forty days in order to release a soul from purgatory, in addition to what she was continually suffering to atone for the faults of others and to gain them pardon for their sins. In the life of St. Catherine of Siena one can see the incredible martyrdoms which she suffered in her last days to remedy as much as possible the evils of the schism, and she also suffered greatly to expiate for the sins of others.

13 Acts 9:5. "He does not say: Why do you persecute My saints, or why do you persecute My servants, but why do you persecute Me; that is, why do you persecute My members? The head calls for the members. When by chance in a crowd you hurt your foot, the tongue says: You kicked me. One does not say, You kicked my foot, but that he was kicked" (St. Augustine, *In Ps.* 30, *Serm.* 2).

14 Apoc. 7:14.

15 Luke 10:16; John 15:8, 16 f.

16 Bacuez, *loc. cit.:* "In virtue of the union of the Savior with the Church there is established between the two a type of solidarity or a communication of properties *(communicatio idiomatum).* To hear the Church is to hear Christ, and to abandon oneself to Christ is to be united with the Church (I Thess. 4:8; Luc. 10:18). . . . The same relationship exists between Christ and His members. He who helps a Christian, helps Christ, and he who persecutes a Christian, persecutes Christ (Acts. 9:5; I Cor. 8:12). . . . Nothing supernatural is effected in them, through them, or for them, unless Christ does it; that is, unless His Spirit concurs as the principal agent (Rom. 8:14-26; I Cor. 12:3 f.; Phil. 2:13). . . . Therefore all the works of the faithful, if they are performed in a Christian manner, have a superhuman dignity and merit a part of the rewards of the God-man."

munication with the head; it receives no life from the soul and normally it cannot be reanimated and reformed as long as it does not adhere to the body.

So the Protestants, in denying the authority of the Church, were logical—with the logic of error—in denying also the necessity of good works or of imitating the divine Model. They do not wish mortification, they do not wish to be crucified with Jesus Christ, they do not aspire to put off the old man and be clothed in the new, because actually it is impossible that Christ be formed in them as long as they are deliberately separated from that which is His body and His plenitude.[17]

But if we remain united in the one faith, rooted and established in charity, then Christ will be in us and we in Him as His living members. Then will He strengthen us with the power of His Spirit[18] and He will not look on us as strangers. Rather He will nurture and feed us with His own flesh, He will strengthen and invigorate us with His sacraments, especially that of the Eucharist, and He will bestow on us His gifts and graces and the care with which He watches over us. "For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church: because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." [19] Under the action of His Spirit, we shall become His feet, His hands, His tongue . . . and if we succeed in separating the precious from the vile, we shall be as His very eyes.[20]

17 "And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. 5:24). But "the Protestant does not say: 'I suffer that which is lacking in the passion of the Savior.' Rather, he says to Christ crucified: 'Suffer alone, Lord.' Such is his dogma, if not his practice. Protestantism is essentially the abolition of sacrifice" (Gratry, *Sources).*

18Eph. 3:16f.

19Eph. 5:29f.

80 Jer. 15:19. St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, chap. 29: "The Holy Ghost takes the souls which have received Him and carries them to the presence of the Word in order to place them . . . where? O divine Love! Of what art Thou not capable? . . . He places some souls in the sacred head, others in the venerable mouth, some souls are so pure and resplendent that He deigns to place them in His radiant eyes. What am I saying? These souls become the very eyes of the Word and, what is more, the pupils of His eyes, so that they see all that the Word sees in the measure that a creature can. To such souls in particular apply the words: 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye' (Zach. 2:8). The desires of such a soul are so inflamed that the soul would be ready to give its life a thousand times, if necessary, for each one of his neighbors. . . . He creates them in His heart with ardent sighs, like him who desired to be anathema for the salvation of his brothers (Rom. 9:3) and said: 'My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be

In this way shall Jesus Christ be magnified in our bodies, whether it be by life or by death, for He is our life,[21] and the Church "is His body and the fullness of Him who is filled all in all." [22] "Without the head," says Bacuez, "the members could have neither movement nor life; and without the members, the head could not realize all its functions. Therefore, the members are its completion at the same time that they are its organs. . . . St. Paul says that God desires to reunite and restore all things in Christ and that He made Him the head not only of men, but of angels." [23] So it is that all the power with which we work for eternal life proceeds from Him, and only in Him can we live for God.

Therefore we should beg Him that we may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.[24] Therefore also we must mortify our self-love and self-will and bear joyfully, or at least resignedly, all the sufferings necessary to purify ourselves and become adapted perfectly to the office or ministry that is entrusted to us. Only thus can we fill up those things that are wanting to the sufferings of Christ in our flesh, for His body, which is the Church.[25]

formed in you' (Gal. 4:19). And what were the sharp pains of this childbirth? Those indicated by these words: 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire?' (II Cor. 11:29.) And these sorrows do not last but a little while, for a soul is hardly created when already there are conceived, because of the ardor of its longings, not only thousands, but millions of others. The zeal of these souls is so great that they are not content with one, two, or three cities, but they covet the whole world, and they are not satisfied with creatures actually present, but they reach out to all those who will yet exist, so much does love enlarge their heart where these longings are engendered."

21 Phil. 1:20.

22 Eph. 1:23.

23 Bacuez, *op. cit.,* pp. 405 f.

24 Col. 1:9 f.

25 Col. 1:24. "The crown of thorns which caused the Spouse to suffer much is for the beloved a sweet refreshment. . . . That august head was not pierced by each one of the thorns of the crown, but some remained outside. And these thorns, O beloved Spouse, Thou hast reserved for Thy chosen ones so that they can participate in Thy sufferings and through their pains attain merit and valor by uniting them with Thine. . . . If Thou hadst kept them all for Thyself, these souls could not have shared in Thy pains and they would have been deprived of the immense treasures which are hidden in Thy sacred head. But the thorns which actually pierced Thy head made apertures through which pious souls can see the treasures of Thy wisdom" (St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, chap. 17).

This is a hidden mystery which is revealed only to the saints who recognize the prodigious riches and secret glory of the life of Jesus Christ in pious and just souls. The mission of His ministers is to employ the power which they have received from Him, "admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." [26] Therefore, as the Apostle says, "Let no man seduce you, . . . walking in the things which he hath not seen, in vain puffed up by the sense of his flesh, and not holding the head, from which the whole body, by joints and bands, being supplied with nourishment and compacted, groweth unto the increase of God." [27]

It follows from this that no one should depart from his respective post nor assume functions of other members which appear more noble. The perfection of each one lies in being faithfully adapted to his destiny, according to the divine will, in maintaining a harmony with the other members so as not to impede them, but to aid their activity as much as possible and they to do likewise for him.[28] Thus harmony, health, and prosperity will reign if we all conduct ourselves worthily according to our vocation, with all humility, meekness, and patience, suffering with charity one for another, solicitous to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For we all form one body, we all have one spirit, and the one and the same hope encourages us in our calling. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; one God and Father of all, who distributes to each one of the graces according to the measure of the giving of Christ, who descended to the earth—and even to the infernal regions—and then ascended to heaven to make all things perfect.[29] He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, others

[26] Col. 1:26-28.

[27] Col. 2:18 f.

[28] St. Ignatius Martyr said that the college of presbyters ought to be in accord with their bishop as are the strings on a lyre. The Lord promised to be in the midst of those who are gathered together in His name. For that reason prayers said in common are more efficacious than those in private. In virtue of this solidarity, when a soul commends itself to the prayers of others, even when they forget to fulfill the charge, the soul is truly aided and travels much more securely, as our Lord manifested to St. Gertrude.

[29] Emmerich, *Life of Our Lord,* p. lx: "The descent of Jesus into hell is the planting of the tree of grace destined to communicate His merits to suffering souls. The continual redemption of these souls is the fruit which that tree produces in the spiritual garden of the Church. The Church militant must care for this tree and gather its fruits to communicate them to the Church suffering in purgatory which

as evangelists, and others as pastors and doctors, so that the perfection of the saints might be consummated in the works of their respective ministry, and thus the whole body of Jesus Christ might grow prosperously until, united by faith and knowledge of the Son of God, all of us bear the image of the perfect man and we are no longer like children carried about with every wind of doctrine.[30]

In this way we see, as Scio says *(loc. cit.),* that "in the mystical body of Jesus Christ and in each one of His members there should occur the same thing that took place in His natural body. The faithful must grow continually in faith and in charity until they arrive at the status of perfect Christians. . . . This increase of powers in each of the members will make the body of the Church attain its ultimate measure and perfection." [31]

Terrien says:

Since we have been baptized in Christ in order to be regenerated, in Him we have been born to the divine life and it is only in Him that we can live it. If, then, we wish to find the new son of God who comes forth alive and pure from the baptismal waters, we must not look outside of Christ. This new son of God is in Christ and is vivified by His Spirit as flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone, and an integral part of His mystical body. If in this body there are all types of organs, as the Apostle enumerates, it is so that all of them may contribute to the perfection of the saints by fulfilling well the functions of their respective ministries for the edification of the body of Christ. And when will this work cease? When "we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ." That is to say, when His body, by the conjunction and development of all the members, shall arrive at the plenitude of its predetermined perfection. Meanwhile this body of Christ is as yet incomplete: it is in the

can do nothing to help itself. The same thing is true of all the merits of Christ. To share in them it is necessary to work for Him." See also Faber, *All for Jesus,* chap. 5.

80 See Eph. 4:2-14.

81 Moehler, *L'unité dans l'Eglise,* p. 73: "The Church in general is the prototype of each of its members in particular and so each of these members ought to be aware of his proper character which consists in reproducing in himself the whole. So as an interior necessity—the love in Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost—unites each one of the faithful with the community of his contemporaries, so also does it unite him with the faithful who preceded him and it obliges him to maintain identity with them."

way of formation. His natural body has already reached its full development and it does not change, grow, or become any more perfect than it was when it came forth gloriously from the tomb. But this other and more extensive body, in view of which He deigned to clothe Himself in the first, His human body, must be formed throughout the centuries. So Jesus Christ is formed and grows within us, and we grow in Christ,[32] and it can truly be said that the supernatural growth of the members in union with the Head is an increase of God, of the incarnate God: *incrementum Dei.*™ If we walk along the paths of God and are firm in faith, living in charity, we live also in Christ[84] and, reciprocally, He it is who suffers and is persecuted in us.[35]

Therefore we should present our bodies, as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing unto God, our reasonable service. We should not be conformed to this world but we should be reformed in the newness of the Spirit in order to prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. We should not aspire to that which does not concern us, but we should be content with the grace that He gives us, for as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ and every one members of one another, having different gifts, according to the grace that is given us.[38]

So Jesus Christ will always work in us and through us if we faithfully strive to follow the motion of His Spirit in all our respective mysteries. In this way His work will be perfected in each one, and throughout the whole organism His action will be increasingly more full and perfect. "St. Paul expressly tells us that the sacred functions and spiritual gifts are distributed among the ministers of the Savior in such wise that all contribute to the edification of the Church and the formation of saints and that this ministry has for its object to unite souls in the one faith, to make known in all parts the Son of God made man, to communicate His Spirit to all His members, and to make of each one of them and of the Church as a whole a perfect Christ, *virum perfectum,* having full possession of His life, His power, and His virtues." [37]

32 I Pet. 2:2.
s3 Col. 2:19.
34 Col. 6:7.
35 Terrien, *op. cit.,* I, 316 f.
36 Rom. 12:1-6.
37 See Bacuez, *op. cit.,* p. 410.

Organization and Diversity of Functions

Since organization presupposes inequality, diversity of elements, and subordination, the perfection of an organism does not consist in the perfection of one member, however noble it may be, nor in various equivalent members, but in the harmonious combination of many members of unequal nobility and of diverse functions In the Church the members that serve for movement are represented by the faithful who are dedicated to the active life, and among them there will be inferior and superior, as in our natural body we have hands and feet. The organs of sensation serving for perception represent the faithful of the contemplative life, the eyes; these are the great doctors, the truly illumined wise men who see and contemplate truth. The ordinary masters, who are entrusted with teaching truth, are the tongue. And the ears are the disciples who hear the truth and also those who listen to the voice of the Spirit.[38]

The Church must have masters and disciples, otherwise it would be an incomplete organism, like a man who is all eyes, without a place for ears. And if all were reduced to these two organs, where would be the other necessary senses: smell, touch, and taste? In the Church there are many who are as yet incapable of comprehending the words of divine Wisdom; these words they perceive as from afar and they are attracted by the sweetness of His fragrance.[38] Thus did it happen to St. Augustine when he bore only a loving remembrance and, as it were, a desire to smell the fragrance of that which as yet he was unable to taste.[40] But others not only smell, but they taste and relish in silence the tenderness and sweetness of God, though they are unable to express these marvels. When they taste Him through their experience of Him they acquire a remarkable knowledge: *gustate et videte*. Still others, mute and blind in the presence of the ineffable, blinded by such great light, confounded by such grandeur, terrified by such power, and harassed by the bitterness of their own miseries, neither see nor hear nor taste nor even smell the divine truth. Yet they feel

[38] Apoc. 2:3.
[38] Cant. 1:3.
[40] *Confessions,* VII, 17.

it as an infinite reality whose weight crushes them and whose goodness and truth completely captivate them and are impressed on them with tangible evidence. God decreed that in the mystical body of His Church there should be a prodigious diversity of members necessary to carry out its complex and varied functions. He decreed that there should be every kind of sensory, motor, and regulatory organ which with the passage of time should develop, and become consolidated and interrelated. He decreed that there should be a beautiful variety of internal senses and external senses, with their respective cerebral and cardiac centers (the souls hidden from the eyes of the world, but very active and filled with life in the divine eyes) and He made these multiple and diverse, not that they should be useless and separated, but that they should be united and correlated in harmonious activity. Thus the one completes the other, and no single one is sufficient to itself, but all unite in mutual solidarity and contribute more efficaciously to the common edification. The merit and reward will be proportionate to the vitality and activity and real influence of each one.

"Contemplatives," says St. Magdalen of Pazzi, "will find rest in the eyes of the Word; doctors in His mouth; the merciful in His breast; the just in His hands; the active in His feet; the patient in His shoulders; the virgins, His spouses, totally inflamed with love and perfectly resigned to His will, in His ever open heart so that they will be able to enter therein and find their repose." [41]

For an organism to be perfect it must be made up of many and various members. So the Church must be made up of members of distinct orders and of every state and condition in order to manifest better the various virtues and graces. With the diversity of charisms, she shall appear clothed with varieties [42] and by means of hierarchical subordination and the perfect disposition of the whole composite, she is terrible as an army set in array.[43] All the members, then, are necessary and, although some seem to be or actually are less noble than others, these are usually the most indispensable, as are the entrails in a natural body. No member, however noble in itself, can ever say to another: "I do not need you." The eye can-

[41] *Op. cit.,* Ill, chap. 5.
[42] Ps. 44:15.
[43] Cant. 6:3.

not speak thus to the hands, nor the ear to the feet, nor the head to the members. The contemplatives, symbolized by sight and hearing, need the feet and hands of the active members, who procure the necessary nourishment for them.[44] On the other hand, the active members need the heat, light, and direction of the contemplatives. In the same way, the head must make use of the members in order to work, and its glory is the multitude and diversity of members.[45]

If in our body, as the Apostle remarks, we treat with greater honor and care the members which seem to be less decorous, adorning them and covering them out of decency, the same thing happens in the Church of God. We consider the ears less noble than the eyes, and therefore they are adorned with earrings while the eyes do not admit of any adornment. The feet are covered with rich sandals, sometimes covered with precious stones[46] while the hands are left uncovered. So in the Church it is fitting that the imperfect members be given greater consolations and gifts than the more perfect, who no longer need them.[47] And if the less decorous members of the body require a watchfulness and covering which are not necessary for the more decorous parts, so also in the Church those who have committed a fault must be admonished and guarded, whereas the innocent do not require this.

All are members of Christ and, although they are not equally worthy, they must not on that account cease to be united in solidarity. Charity teaches us to treat all our neighbors, whether good or bad, healthy or ill, in a way requisite or necessary to each one. Hence it is sometimes necessary to act with greater consideration toward sinners than toward the just; to unworthy ministers of the sanctuary, who by their conduct dishonor it, than to worthy priests whose virtues captivate hearts. For ultimately all are members, organs, or ministers of Jesus Christ and only as such, in virtue of the relation which they have or can have to Him, do they merit or demand of us the love of charity. Evidently the weak, sick, or dying members require more care than the robust, healthy, those full of life. It is also true that the more united they are actually with

** Luke 10:39.
45 Prov. 14:28.
46 Cant. 7:1.
47 Isa. 40:11; I Pet. 3:7.

Christ, the better does He work through them and the more fully it redounds to Him whatever we do for them. Therefore the just and the saints merit our veneration, for in them Jesus Christ shines forth. Furthermore, many of those organs that are injured, sick, almost dead, or even corrupted, sometimes fulfill interesting functions for the common good by reason of their ministerial power which works independently of life.[48] Aided by these healthy and robust members, they will fulfill their tasks well enough; without their help, they will work so poorly that, if there is not someone to supply or compensate for their defects, they will cause a general unbalance in the body because of the lack of a function which is more or less necessary to the organism.

Moreover, if the human body has a great number of organs and many organic elements or anatomic elements with diverse functions, how much more so in the case of the vast body of the Church? In the brain alone we have many millions of cells or neurones without any one being superfluous or lacking its particular function. Each tiny element has its proper office with its particular nuance distinguishing it from the others. All are necessary if the natural life is to be fully manifested and if from that variety solidarity and harmony are to result. With even greater reason, that the divine life may be perfectly manifested in the prodigious organism of the Church, each element, each one of the faithful, must have his special mission to which he must be completely attentive in order to be perfect in his order and according to his measure and thus contribute his part to the whole mystical body.[49]

48 See St. Thomas, *In III Sent.,* dist. 13, q. 2, a.2.

49Denifle, *Das Geistliche Leben,* chap. 3: "We should content ourselves with discovering to what task God has destined us and what grace He deigns to grant us. For every ministry or talent, however humble, is another grace which the Holy Ghost distributes for the good of souls. . . . Each one ought to apply himself to that office for which God has given him an aptitude. . . . The foot and the hand should not try to replace the eve. Let us work, each one, at the task to which He has assigned us; however lowly it is, perhaps we are the only ones able to do it."

St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God,* II, 7: "The Church sings on the feast of a confessor: *None was found like to him.* And since in heaven no one knows the new name save he who receives it, for each of the blessed has his own particular name which befits the new glorified being which he acquires, so also on earth each one receives a particular grace which is not like that of any other. ... As one star differs from another in splendor, so one man will differ from another in glory, a certain sign that they also differed in grace. . . . The Church is a garden of different flowers in which there is an infinite variety of sizes, colors, and odors and

Each member, by the mere fact that it is a member, should contribute whatever it can to the harmony and well-being of the whole, adapting itself more and more to the proper office or particular ministry which has been entrusted to it through confirmation, holy orders, or a secret charism, in order that it may be completely perfect and as useful as possible.[60] It should subordinate itself and, if necessary, sacrifice itself for the common good because in the end this will redound to the benefit of each one in particular. Even the organs that seem to be sacrificed receive new solidarity, vigor, and an increase of life; but if any organ functions badly, it immediately begins to deteriorate, as also do the others, because of the inequilibrium which is caused. Those that have received greater talents, gifts, graces, charisms, or dignities have the greater obligation to work and sacrifice themselves for others, under pain of being considered unfaithful servants who appropriate to themselves what is not their own and do not strive to care well for the house of the Lord.

Here is the very *raison d'être* and the basis of the heroic Christian abnegation, the spirit of sacrifice, and the excessive tortures and afflictions of all kinds which many innocent souls prefer to endure and, apparently, without fruit, while other souls, less perfect and even lukewarm or weak, seem to produce plentiful fruit

different perfections. All have their value, their grace, their luster, and all, taken together with their differences, are a most agreeable perfection of beauty."

St. Thomas, *In I Cor. 12,* lect. 2: "Just as there is no member in the body which does not participate in some way in sensation or motion through the head, so there is no one in the Church who does not share in some way in the graces of the Holy Ghost, according to Matt. 25: 'He gave to every one according to his proper ability,' and Eph. 4: 'But to every one of us is given grace.' " This distribution of grace even reaches sinners, with the exception of sanctifying grace which makes us pleasing to God. "It pertains to grace *gratum faciens* that through it the Holy Ghost dwells in the soul. This does not pertain to grace *gratis data,* but only that through it the Holy Ghost is manifested, as the interior motion of the heart is manifested by the voice. . . . The Holy Ghost is manifested by these graces in a twofold manner: as dwelling in the Church and teaching and sanctifying it, for example, as when a sinner in whom the Holy Ghost does not dwell performs miracles to show that the faith of the Church which he preaches is true. . . . The second way the Holy Ghost is manifested by this grace is as dwelling in him to whom those graces are granted. Whence it is said (Acts 6), 'And Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people.' . . . But such graces are given only to the saints. Whence it is said (I Cor. 14:12): 'Seek to abound unto the edifying of the Church.' "

60 I Cor. 12:4-30; I Pet. 4:10.

with but little effort. The former, the pure souls, are the true living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Their sufferings are more than purgations; they are propitiations which make them suffer so that other members may be relieved and cured, and work with greater facility. If these other members seem to produce fruit, the former, however hidden and submerged they may seem, have reserved to them almost all the reward, for everyone shall receive in proportion to his labor.[51]

The chief mission, though a hidden one, of all these victim souls is to continue the expiatory, propitiatory, and reparatory work of Calvary; to placate the wrath of God and merit pardon and graces; to do what Mary did at the foot of the cross; to cooperate in the work of our redemption, regeneration, vivification, and sanctification. In a mystical manner they comfort and relieve Jesus by being associated with Him in His sufferings. They make reparation for the offenses, forgetfulness, disdain, and blasphemies of the worldly; they intercept the chastisements of God and turn them into blessings; they obtain pardon for sinners, constancy for the just, health for the infirm, consolation for the afflicted, and a suitable remedy for all their needs.[52] These souls are the blessing of the earth, because in their pure and humble hearts He finds His delight, He who is a bundle of myrrh and who grazes among the lilies. One of these victims brings down more blessings from heaven than thousands or millions of the ordinary just souls who do no more than purge their own faults and imperfections.[53]

[51] 1 Cor. 3:8.

[52] Catherine Emmerich felt and remedied the needs of others even during sleep and many times she was afflicted with the symptoms of various diseases in order to relieve those who suffered from them and later, as if by magic, she would be freed from them. Mother Mary of the Queen of the Apostles told me that the terrible sufferings she endured during her last illness were exacted of her by our Lord for the good of certain souls who resisted Him greatly. The Savior once presented Himself to Ven. Francisca of the Blessed Sacrament, covered with wounds and shedding much blood, and He told her that the sins of Christians did that to Him. But He did not lay waste the world because of the good souls in His Church who tied His hands, as it were, to prevent Him from destroying the world.

The eternal Father once said to St. Catherine of Siena: "The prayers of My servants and friends who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, My clemency, seek My glory and the salvation of their neighbors and plead for their salvation with inestimable charity, restrain Ade, placate My wrath, and tie the hands of My justice under which I would crush the sinner. Because of their continual tears and heartfelt supplications by which they strive to placate Me, they force Me to restrain Myself" (*Dialogue,* chap. 143).

[53] St. Catherine of Genoa, *Dialogues,* III, 11: "It is undeniable that if men knew how to appreciate the value of these intercessions, all the veneration and gratitude

As examples of such souls we may look to St. Catherine of Siena, who was always suffering, praying, and working marvels; and St. Ludwina, who was prostrate on a bed of pain, covered with wounds, unable to eat or sleep, but who passed her life joyfully and to the great consolation of others; or the angelic St. Rose of Lima, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, and Catherine Emmerich, whose lives were continual peaceful holocausts. The former, though they innocently suffered all manner of martyrdoms, were at least able to see a measure of the fruits of their works, but the latter saw nothing until almost the end of their lives.

Other souls gathered their fruits after their lives had been spent, such as Ven. Sister Barbara who, candid and innocent, passed her life in sorrows and prolonged martyrdoms which seemed to her small in comparison with the desires which she experienced to suffer for her Beloved. She endured great sufferings exteriorly and even more interiorly until her last breath at the age of thirty years. "Are you not yet satisfied with such suffering?" they asked her. "No," she replied. "More. Still more!" So saying, she expired. Then all Seville, as if driven by a mysterious force, came to venerate the body of the holy nun who in life was unknown to them. Crowds of the faithful remained at the body for a week and would not permit it to be buried. The body itself, so mortified in life, seemed to be alive; it was fresh and beautiful and filled with a heavenly

which they could show to these servants of God would seem but little. They would pay them a cult of honor, veneration, and invocation that would be a consequence of the adoration which they give to the Lord. But these privileged saints who are buried in themselves as in a paradise of peace and benediction are almost always ignored. . . . God hides from them the power which He heaps on them and, although He wishes to inebriate them with His holy love, He does not spare them any kind of contradictions. He crushes them without mercy in the press of His justice so that there will remain in them no trace of the stains of sin."

Tauler, *Institutions,* 26: "Truly those who find themselves in this state are the most noble men. In one brief hour they bring more profit to holy Church than do all other just souls in many years, for in this depth of the soul and God Himself one introspection is more profitable and excellent than are many great exercises and works performed without it. Only in the depth and center of the soul is found certain peace and the truly deiform life."

So it is that the mystical life, writes Ven. Bartholomew of the Martyrs *(Comp. Myst.,* chap. 13), "purges, illumines, and perfects the soul; it delights, satiates, strengthens, and aids not one or another neighbor, but, by means of a certain vivifying influx, it nourishes the entire mystical body of the Church. In the most extensive womb of maternal benevolence it embraces all the members of the Church and their works, offering them to God and supplicating and pleading for them as most pleasing intermediaries for the needy to supply their spiritual wants."

fragrance. While this nun was enduring her most terrible sufferings, far away the Vatican Council was in session.[54]

"What souls are those," ask the rationalists, "who can break into tears before a crucifix but remain unmoved at news of a great public calamity?" Unmoved! Those who truly live crucified with Christ! Those who weep before the crucifix and beg for a remedy for all the evils of the world! Those who, loving God with all their heart, feel as their own all the infirmities of their neighbor and can even say with the Apostle: "Who is weak and I am not weak?" [55] [56] Who is it that seeks and finds an apt remedy for all public and private calamities, but the holy Church in whose mystical body those souls form the most sensitive, the most vital, and the most delicate organs? [58] Are these things remedied perhaps by those haughty freethinkers with their coldness, pride, and refined self-love? Rather, by commenting on them as sensational news they aggravate and foment them. They hail the one who triumphs and censure and ridicule the oppressed, but never do they manifest a sacrifice or show any gratitude. They weep, perhaps, at the hero of a novel or of the theater, but they are unmoved by persecuted virtue and even less by the bleeding image of Him who for love of us was weighed down

54 A similar case was that of Mother Mary Queen of the Apostles who died at the age of twenty-five after offering herself as an expiatory victim for sinners. She died suffering extreme pains for sinners, as she herself confessed to me, and she had announced fifteen days before that she would spend the feast of the Assumption (1905) in glory.

55 Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 63: "The transformed soul loves all creatures as God loves them, for in every creature it sees only God and there reads His name. So the soul shares the joys and sorrows of its neighbors. The faults of men do not make it haughty or incline it to contempt; . . . rather, they aid the soul to enter into its own nothingness. . . . Such souls also experience the evils which their neighbor suffers in his body and they suffer with him as did the Apostle."

"Ah, Lord," exclaims St. Catherine of Siena *(.Life,* prologue, 15), "How can I rest as long as a single soul, created in Thy image, is in danger of perishing? Would it not be better that all men should be saved and that I should be damned, on the condition that I could keep loving Thee?"

56 Chauvin, *Qu'est ce qu'un Saint,* p. 34: "Since the love of neighbor translated into action is the best criterion of perfection, all the saints were in a certain manner great benefactors of humanity. No physical or moral need was hidden from their zeal: the protection of infants, teaching in all its forms, intellectual and moral culture, agriculture, industry, care of the sick, the old, orphans, and the oppressed, assistance to the poor and workingmen, state pawnshops and popular savings banks, all these things they anticipated or established. The greater part of philanthropic institutions were originally organized by saints and now we do nothing more than continue their work and sometimes with less amplitude and poorer results."

with the burden of our sins, and who by His wounds gave us life, regenerated humanity, and changed the face of the earth.

APPENDIX

1. Incorporation with Christ

St. Matilda, *Liber spec, gratiae,* I, 24-37:

If you wish to arrive at true sanctity, adhere to Him who is truth itself and who sanctifies all things. Unite yourself to Him, and the ocean of His purity will wash away your faults and cure you of all your weaknesses. Yes, unite yourself intimately with Him, and His divine power will pass into your interior, for His love reserves nothing for Himself alone, but communicates itself to those who love Him and accept his gifts. . . . Such souls feel the divinity circulate within themselves and they pour themselves into Christ as water into a canal when the gates are opened. Love for their Master so inflames their hearts that all the works they do are wood which feeds the fire until it reaches to the divine heart.

Weiss, *Apolog.,* X, 21:

St. Gertrude regards herself as a tree which had sprouted up in the wound in Christ's side, the leaves and branches of which were so penetrated with the power of His divinity and His humanity that they shone forth like gold through glass. So sweet a perfume of Christ was diffused by its fruits that to the souls in purgatory was borne a certain sweetness in the midst of their pains, to the just an increase of grace, and to sinners the salutary remedy of penitence. Because of this union, her works were gazed upon by the most blessed Trinity with such pleasure as if they were works proper to the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the goodness of the Holy Ghost.

St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 137:

I desire to see you united and transformed in the inestimable charity of Christ in such a way that we, who are sterile and unfruitful trees, may be engrafted on the tree of life and thus bring forth tasty and sweet fruit, not of ourselves, but through the Author of grace who dwells in us. For as the body lives for the soul, so the soul lives for God. . . . Oh, abyss of charity! That I might never be separated from Thee, Thou didst desire

to make a grafting of Thyself on me. This was effected when Thou didst sow the seed of Thy Word in the field of the sweet Virgin Mary.

Thus we see how "through the power of grace man feels that Christ is so closely united to him that his body and all its members seem to be those of Christ. In his imagination and feelings he no longer sees himself, but only Jesus Christ. This seems to be what the Apostle experienced when he said: 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.' This it is that enables the saints many times to work in Christ with the same confidence of the Apostle, who added: 'Do you seek a proof of Christ who speaketh in me?' " (II Cor. 13:3.) Surin, *Catéch.*, VII, chap. 8.

2. Christian Solidarity

St. Gertrude (*Revel.*, Ill, chap. 76) once saw our Lord who manifested to her, under the symbol of His corporal body, the mystical body of His Church. He appeared before her with His right side highly ornamented and adorned, but His left side naked and covered with ulcerous sores. The one side represented the just, full of virtues, the other side represented the imperfect, the vicious, and the corrupt. She noticed that those who honor the good but who so severely reprimand the evil that instead of correcting them they exasperate them, adorn one side of the Savior's body while they so afflict the ulcers of the other side of the body that they make the putrid contents fly into His face. In the same way those who greatly esteem virtuous prelates and disdain the imperfect and evil, adorn one half of the Savior's head with precious stones while they cruelly buffet the other side. The saint understood that so intimate is the union of the members with the divine Head that we are obliged to treat them all, whether well or infirm, with the solicitude owing to each one. Those who, instead of attempting to correct the faults of their neighbors, by their silence suffer them to increase, aggravate the wounds of the Savior. Those who correct others with but little patience and charity produce deep wounds while they appear to cure the surface wounds. Those who do not take care to give good example, inflame the Savior's flesh with their poisonous breath. But He wipes away the stains of the left side with the cloth which He carries in His right hand, thus applying to the infirm the merits of the holy and the just.

"I promised thee and I still promise thee," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena (*Dialogue,* chap. 166), "that I shall reform My spouse through the sufferings of My servants, whom I invite to expiate with Me by means of sorrow and tears the iniquity of My ministers. I have shown thee the dignity with which I have invested these ministers and the respect which the faithful owe to them and I have already told thee that their faults give no motive for respecting them less."

3. The Expiatory Ministry

In *The Life of Our Lord,* Introd., XI, we read of Catherine Emmerich that,

> destined to exercise unceasingly the ministry of expiation and satisfaction, she was able to embrace whole centuries and all the parts of the Church in its development through time, to penetrate them as if she were actually present to them, to see even the most humble and unfortunate of its members, to approach them and place herself in relation with them. . . . In spirit she visits the poor and infirm in prisons, in hospitals, in the hovels where their misery and despair is hidden, in the houses of correction, in the galleys, and even in the ships of pirates. She consoles the afflicted, the forgotten, the vanquished, whether they live close to her or in the heart of Russia or China or on the unknown islands of the Pacific. . . . She instructs them, she makes them enter the bosom of the Church, and she opens the gates of heaven to them. She assists the sick in their last agony, she protects souls from danger, she prevents crime and leads the sinner to the path of righteousness. . . . But the principal object of her visions and her works and sufferings is the dangers which threaten the Church: the brutal violence, the attacks of impiety, the infidelity and worldly spirit of priests and bishops, the indifference and corruption of Christians, and the abuse of precious graces. She struggles constantly against the mysterious powers of the Masonic lodges, that diabolical church whose history and ramifications she knows and which forms a horrible spider-web which covers the world. At the same time she offers herself for the faults committed during the celebration of the Mass, against the Rules of Orders, and all profanations of the Eucharistic mysteries. She prevents sacriligeous thefts and intervenes in Ecclesiastical assemblies to oppose the advancement of absurd exegesis and ridiculous and impious systems of education. . . . She sees the baseness with which certain priests, slaves of the world, sell their souls. . . . She sees the graces which are lost through the fault of such priests. She suffers for

seminaries and communities of religious and during the last years of Pope Pius VII, she went every day to Rome to console the Holy Father, to enlighten him, and to disclose to him the plots of unbelievers. . . . From her infancy she had so vivid an awareness of the bonds which unite the various members of the sacred body of the Church and so clear an understanding of what one member can do for another through prayer, suffering, and various works of penance, that public calamities, the miseries of sinners, and their needs tore at her heart. Thus did she feel herself irresistibly drawn to pray without ceasing for the unfortunate and to offer herself as a victim of expiation.

On a certain occasion the Blessed Virgin said to her (chap. 12): "Whatever one wholeheartedly desires to do for God and neighbor is really effected through prayer; you are then able to do what you desire to do and you also see what you do." "Not being able to realize my pious desires physically," she adds, "I must realize them in spirit."

CHAPTER XI

Process of the Evolution of the Church

^sJSSsSSSsSS&sSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSssSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSssSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSsSSSj

THE integral process of the collective evolution of the Church is extremely complex and it depends upon a multiplicity of factors. However, it is sufficient for our purpose to point out that this evolution is a result of the individual perfection of each of the faithful, of their specialization and adaptation as elements or organs in the mystical body of Christ, and of the collective functions of all the members together. That is to say, this evolution proceeds from the right administration of the sacraments, which are the channels through which the vivifying blood of the Savior circulates throughout the entire organism, and from the good use of the divine talents, charisms, and graces which are ordained especially to the good of the composite. The functions of the collective life, whether visible or invisible, ministerial or charismatic, presupposing, of course, the consummated perfection of the saints in the works of their respective ministeries, are what most directly influence the edification of the body of Christ. On the other hand, if those functions are ill performed, owing to the lack of the requisite perfection or the necessary dispositions in the organs or ministers, great upheavals or a general disedification results.

Causes of Progress and Retrogression

The progressive adaptation, differentiation, and specialization of all the members under the motions of the Holy Ghost, who through them distributes His graces, gifts, and charisms, produce solidarity and harmony. They likewise increase the vigor and beauty of the members and bind them more tightly with the sweet bonds of per-

fection which are peace and charity. When peace and charity reign, there is healthy increase, prosperity, expansion, and propagation, accompanied by a copious fructification. All this contributes to the production of many saints who are the lawful fruits of the Spouse of the Lamb, and one saint produced by her in perfect conformity with the divine model would suffice to honor her and even to justify the work of creation and redemption.[1] In spite of the evils which we lament, in each century the Church sends to heaven a great multitude of those who are the joy of the world, the salvation of the earth, and the incomparable glory of the true Church of Christ.[2]

Under the influence of the divine Spirit, the Church produces or germinates from time to time as nurseries of saints and means of reformation, certain organizations which seem to be innovations but which in reality are simple expansions of some word of life that came forth from the lips of the Savior. They serve to fill a vacant place in the organic plan of the Church, to accomplish a new function, or to perform some important task for the good of all. The elements or organs which compose such organizations are united among themselves by the bonds of an intimate and singular solidarity. All of them, if faithful to their calling, share in a certain special communication of the spirit who inspires and vivifies the whole organization. Their object is to contribute in a new and special way to the edification of the Church, and without this motive they would have no reason for being and would be extinguished. Under this class are all the religious congregations which, not by human will, but by divine inspiration, appear from time to time as there is need for them. They are the flowers of the divine Wisdom whence they bring forth fruits of honor and riches.[3] It follows that the Church is able to judge infallibly in the solemn

1 One saint is sufficient to illumine a century. If from the world which has been made in such a marvelous fashion, with the multitude of men who have been and shall be born into it, no other fruit should come forth but a single saint, it would have been an effort well employed. And even if the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ had gained nothing more than a single saint, it would have been a work worthy of His greatness to die to make such a one" (*Historia de Sto. Domingo y su Orden,* II, chap. 22, by Castillo).

2 We have already seen that of the causes of canonization or beatification under consideration at the outset of this century, half of them, 287, are of servants of God who lived in the nineteenth century.

3 Ecclus. 24:23.

approbation of religious institutes, as it does in the canonization of saints, because this is to determine the legitimate expansions of the tree of life and the true fructification of the sacred deposit which the Church must guard and cultivate.

Yet, in spite of the many fruits of benediction which the Church is continually producing, this holy mother walks sad and sorrowful, and her lamentations, sufferings, and bitterness come not only from persecutions from without but also from the evil conditions and disorder within. There are so many unfaithful, ungrateful, and unworthy children who live entirely according to the flesh or who are guided by worldly prudence, having a horror for the cross of Christ and the prudence of the Spirit. Besides, there are the many lazy and negligent ministers and servants who do not try to put off the old man or to purge themselves of the vain and poisonous elements of the world in order to perform their respective functions worthily. Both classes are the causes of countless infirmities, upheavals, organic unbalances, and miseries, which are usually the hidden occasions of the persecutions that God sends in order to purify the Church, to revive its dead activities, and to provoke salutary and energetic reactions.[4]

The unfaithful servants who do not make good use of the graces received but let them remain idle or use them only for their own interests, according to selfish and worldly standards, are like parasites that sap the vital energy of the organism and cause a state of anemia or weakness in all the surrounding organs. The greater the gifts they have received from God and the greater the benefits they receive from other members, so much the more responsible will they be for the evils of the Church which they were unable to remedy because of their indolence, not to mention those evils which they directly cause by the contagion of their bad example. And those who, though not living in idleness and not guilty of evil conduct, let themselves be led by an individualistic spirit and do not sufficiently subordinate themselves and adapt themselves to their respective ministries, they, when they are the more active, are

[4] St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 93: "The more the Church abounds in tribulation and bitterness, the more the divine Truth promises to make her abound in sweetness and consolation. And this will be her sweetness: the reformation of good and holy shepherds. But the fruit of this Spouse does not need to be reformed because it does not diminish nor does it fall or rot because of evil ministers."

likely to cause more disturbance and damage. Further, all unfaithful and disloyal sons who do nothing but resist and sadden the Spirit of adoption, not only do not despoil themselves of the old man with all his evil tendencies, but are themselves infected with the mental and moral vices of the world. They become debilitated and seriously ill from sins which they call "light" simply because they do not kill, and this sickness disposes for death and is an obstacle impeding the vital impulses of the divine Consoler. In a short time they lose the inestimable life of grace by dying through mortal sin. Then, accumulating sins upon sins, they are so corrupted that they contaminate and poison everything else.

The Church, as a loving mother, strives to imitate her Spouse, the Good Shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep and joyfully carries it back to the fold on His shoulders, although for this one He has left the ninety-nine in the desert (that is, He has left many faithful souls in abandonment). So the Church does not reject but tries to attract by all possible means and to clasp to her breast all those prodigal sons, hoping to heal and revivify them. Only in extreme cases, when she sees that they no longer hear or recognize her and there is no hope of leading them along the right path, or when the damage which they inflict causes great contagion, only then is she forced to cast from her breast these sons of perdition. Then, with the sword of an anathema, and with great agony in her entrails, she cuts them off and flings these putrid members away.

Meanwhile, oppressed with the weight of the countless infirm, wounded, agonizing, and dead which she carries in her arms; bent down with the care that all these and the little ones exact of her; handicapped with the paralysis or heaviness of useless or malformed organs, she advances slowly, her divine beauty disfigured, her face soiled, her body covered with the mud which her enemies fling at her, and her heart torn with sorrow at seeing how, amid the ridicule, jeers, and persecutions, her enemies say to her: "Where is thy Spouse now?" But although sad, she remains serene, for however blackened and soiled she may be, she is always beautiful.[5] With the ceaseless tears of her faithful children and with her own

[5] Cant. 1:4.

blood which her persecutors make flow in torrents, she washes away her stains and is purified. She is, as it were, reborn, like the phoenix, from her own ashes, to resume her journey with gigantic strides and to soar aloft in glorious flight. But however much she rises aloft in this place of our pilgrimage, she must always drag all those members along who, though they are alive and know how to walk, do not resolve to deny themselves sufficiently to let themselves be borne by the divine Spirit and to be able to fly with His mystical wings. And however much she rejoices in her prosperities and triumphs, while her tongue intones hymns of praise and jubilation, her eyes are filled with tears at the loss of so many unfortunate sons, the deserters who with refined malice become her cruel persecutors. Her heart is lacerated and a fainting takes hold of her because of the wicked that forsake the law of the Lord.[6]

She suffers these sorrows principally in her healthiest members which are full of life and feeling and which constitute, as it were, her maternal entrails and are within her very heart. These must suffer as expiatory victims for the malice or lukewarmness of the rest. They suffer incessantly so that all may be healed and the Church may be purified.[7] They sometimes lose their vigor in order to impart it to others so that all may be improved, established, and made joyful in the Lord.[8] And so far as they nourish others

[6] Ps. 118:53. "See, My daughter," said the Lord to St. Catherine of Siena (Letter 93), "how the face of the Church is stained with the baseness, uncleanness, self-love, pride, and avarice of those who are suckled at her breast. But take thy tears and perspiration which spring from the fount of charity and wash her face, for I assure thee that her beauty will not be restored by the sword nor by cruelty nor by war, but only by peace and humble prayers, by the sweat and tears of My servants. And I shall fulfill their fervent desires, and in nothing will My divine providence be wanting to them." See also *Dialogue,* chap. 86.

[7] Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 70: "My soul was greatly favored by God when for all the sins of others I wept and suffered more than for my own. The world would laugh if it could hear me say that I wept more for the sins of others than for my own, because this is not natural. But charity is not a daughter of the world."

St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 105: "Oh, eternal God, receive the sacrifice of my life in this mystical body of holy Church. As I have nothing else to give, Lord, save what Thou hast given me, take from me my heart and press it firmly over the face of Thy spouse."

[8] St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *Œuvres,* I, 6: "If anyone wishes to know how pleasing he is to God, he can discover it by the enjoyment he finds in communicating his goods to others, both spiritual and temporal, both those which he possesses and those which he desires."

with the bread of holy words and comfort them with the good odor of Christ, they are compared to a "heap of wheat, set about with lilies." 9

The perfection of the Church and its true progress are measured by the fruits of life, benediction, and sanctification which it produces; that is, by the number, grandeur, and singular excellences of the saints and the holy religious institutes which the Church bears in her bosom. These are the ones who, with the superabundance of life and divine energies, most forcefully oppose evil and promote good. They are the ones who, in a mysterious and hidden manner, as all things most fundamental to life are mysterious and hidden, provoke those great vital reactions in which not only equilibrium is re-established and lost health recovered, but vigor is renewed and well-being, energy, beauty, and prosperity are increased.

Those holy members or organs that are so influential in the common edification, can hold any visible post or office, and the more humble, the better. For what makes them so great and vigorous is being dead to the world and configured with Christ in order to live with Him hidden in God and to work entirely with the invisible and insuperable power of the divine Spirit who is the living seal of their fortitude.

As these more important members and organs of the Holy Church are increasingly purified, illumined, strengthened, sealed, transformed, and adapted for their divine work, so the entire mystical body will be established, rooted, and edified in charity.10 Thus the Church is developed sound, robust, beautiful, and radiant with graces; it is purged more and more of stains, imperfections, weaknesses, and infirmities which disfigure and render useless weak or poorly adapted members. Ultimately the Church is completely renewed and it can be presented to the divine Spouse pure and immaculate, without the slightest imperfection or blemish, presenting in the whole composite and in each particular member the living image of the perfect Man who is the incarnate Word of God.11

St. Paul, as we have seen, teaches that the divine Spirit distributes

9 Cant. 7:3.
10 Eph. 1:18; 3:16-19; 4:13 f.
11 Eph. 4:12; 5:26f.

His gifts in various ways to the faithful according to the measure of the giving of Christ.[12] Thus all being adapted to their respective ministry and each being assigned a particular function, they need one another and help one another mutually, forming a solid, perfect, and harmonious organism. Thereby all can be perfected in sanctity, arriving fully at their respective destinies, and contributing, in accordance with the vital laws of divine grace, to the edification of the body of the Savior. Since this edification is especially effected through grace and charity, the principal end of the Church should be the sanctification of all its members.

As the perfection and plenitude of Jesus Christ, this sacred body ought to progress in wisdom and grace together with age and in wisdom with greater reason than did Christ. For according to St. Paul, it should be ever increasing in and through all things, and more particularly in the grace and experimental knowledge of the Son of God, as St. Peter commands. It should, then, grow in peace, solidarity, charity, harmony, and divine beauty, and consequently in justice and sanctity, according as it is purified from all its stains, as it rectifies and orders defective members, vivifies and re-establishes those who were dead or infirm, and eliminates or restores the wounded members and regenerates the amputated ones. Thus all the members become completely clean, healthy, robust, and well adapted, and in all of them are fully manifested the treasures of gifts and grace of the Spirit of renewal and sanctification who dwells in them to animate, teach, govern, and sanctify them.

Correlation and Solidarity

Granted the perfect organic solidarity of the mystical body of the Church, we shall see that in it, as in the human body, there is no reason why the members should envy one another, but there is much reason why they should mutually aid and assist one another. Some have a noble position, others a hidden and humble one. But none can say to his companion that he has no need of him. The eye needs the hands, and the head the feet. Though some members are more important, still none are despicable, for all are useful or necessary, and usually those most hidden and more lowly in ap-

[12] 1 Cor. 12:14.

pearancc are the most necessary.[13] Those who work always in silence and whose fruits are scarcely noticed are the most vital and active and are always influencing the common good. All the great mysteries of life are realized in silence and obscurity. What is clearly visible is the expenditure of work and energy. It is, as Claude Bernard points out, a phenomenon of death and not a vital synthesis, a dissolution and not a true evolution. Life consists in evolution, in silent creation or organic constitution.

All members must aid one another and mutually suffer one another. They must adapt themselves in order to work, each one for the benefit of the others. If one is sick, it reflects on all the others; if one prospers, it redounds to the profit of the others. The more they devote themselves to their function, letting themselves be molded by the impress of the Holy Ghost, the better they serve one another and the less they impede one another. The more they depend on one another, the more solidarity they enjoy. It does not matter that one does the work and the other has the glory, for if all wish to be eyes, there will be no hearing nor smell nor taste nor touch nor organization nor life nor fruits of life. All our glory lies in being members of Christ and forming together the mystical body. Therefore the members ought to be numerous and varied so that that mystical body may be formed perfectly and harmoniously. In it God places each member where He will, where it is most fitting, in order that there may be no dissensions among them but that all may conspire to the common good by aiding one another. If one suffers, the others suffer with it; if one is honored, all the others rejoice with it.[14]

[13] St. Clement, *Ep. 1 Cor.*, chaps. 37 f.: "The great can do nothing without the small, nor the small without the great. All the members are interrelated for mutual assistance. The head is worthless without the feet, and the feet without the head. Even the lowliest members are necessary for the organism, and all work together for its good and to keep it healthy. In this way, by the mutual dependence of the faithful, the mystical body of Christ is preserved. Each one, according to the gift which he has received, must be subject to his neighbor. The strong does not disdain the weak, and the weak respects the strong."

[14] Cf. I Cor. 12:12-27. The various members of a body not only influence one another, but they have a natural tendency to aid one another in order to conserve unity and harmony. Thus we see that the hands spontaneously come to the protection of the head and the aid of the other members. The members of the Church ought to do likewise (Gal. 6:2; Eccles. 17:12) and they do so when they are filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. If one member suffers, the others suffer with it and try to alleviate it, compassionating the afflictions of their neighbor (Job 30:25). For when one member is very sick, the whole organism is weakened, and the vital powers are localized for the healing of the wounded part.

Thus, when all the members perfect themselves, adapt themselves, diversify and dedicate themselves more and more to their particular functions, the mystical body of the Church progresses. When the hidden glory of the sons of God is manifested, it will be seen that the most glorious are those who, by their sufferings, labors, and privations, have contributed more to the common progress, although many of them may have been concerned only with bettering themselves by fulfilling in all things the duty of their particular mission.

Each one should strive to be perfect in his own order and in the faithful performance of all his functions; in this way he will arrive at the degree and form of sanctity to which he has been destined and will contribute as much as possible to the common edification of all. True individual progress always efficaciously affects collective progress. It is a vain illusion for a man to attempt great social reforms which do not depend on him, while he disregards what is in his power: his own reformation. By his conversion he can soon prevent many evils and can give much good example. Let many members of a society perfect and reform themselves, and soon the benefit of this reform will be felt. When a soul aspires to Christian perfection, it always inspires others by its good example and leads them after it. And those examples will be the more efficacious as the configuration of that soul with the sufferings of Christ is greater.[15] Also, since the Church as a whole is bettered in this way, its collective progress will in turn redound to all the members and particularly to those who have caused it.

All, therefore, should let themselves be carried by the action and inspiration of God who at each moment determines what they ought to do or suffer in order to be reformed and configured to the image of the new man and thus realize fully the adorable designs of Providence. They should let themselves be penetrated with the unction of the Holy Ghost, who will caress and comfort and fortify them, making them docile to the voice of truth and firm in its practice. Let them place themselves in the hands of God, saying with St. Paul: "Lord, what would you have me do?" or with the Psalmist: "Teach me to do Thy will." Having their hearts pre-

16 St. Teresa, *Life,* chap, n: "If by the help of God the beginner strives to reach the summit of perfection, I do not believe he will ever go to heaven alone but will always take many others with him."

pared to intone in all their works and thoughts a perpetual hymn of praise,[16] the sovereign Artist, the Spirit of the Lord who fills the whole world, contains all things, and has knowledge of the voice,[17] will begin to wound all their fibers with a divine delicacy, drawing from them as from a well-tuned lyre, melodies so inspired, so original, and so celestial, that they are not proper to this world. In each heart He inspires a new canticle and, if they let themselves be tuned and played upon by Him who directs them, then like the choirs of heavenly companies,[18] they will produce all together and without discord the marvelous concert of the glory of God. Each one must contribute his note at the moment he is touched by the divine finger. If he resists, he will cause dissonance. And he must not take into account what God desires and disposes in regard to the others, for it is not his affair to direct the symphony. It is sufficient for him to know what is demanded of himself and to be careful not to refuse.

That is how the eternal Master of truth makes us hear at each moment the voice which will free us from the slavery of error and sin so that in hearing it we no longer walk in darkness but have life-giving light. Thus the eternal Judge sees and judges the deep root, sweet or bitter, of the intention from which our works proceed and which outwardly appear beautiful,[19] but within are vitiated by self-love and worldly viewpoints. So the eternal Truth speaks to each one and at each moment the only word which it needs and which is proper: the word of life. All must be attentive so that they can hear their respective words if they wish to be disciples of the Truth and taught by God Himself.[20] Finally, that is the way our Lord engraves His sweet law on our hearts [21] with letters of love which are the touches of the Spirit.

All of us are obliged to see what in each case He asks of us or exacts of us so that each will not follow his own caprice, but the internal law. It is not enough that something in general be of counsel and that it is not imposed on others, in order that we may be

16 Ps. 56:8; 107:2.
17 Wisd. 1:7.
18 Cant. 1:8.
19 St. Augustine, *Soliloquies,* chap. 14, no. 4.
20 See John 6:45, 64, 69; 8:12, 31-36; 10:27 f.
21 See Heb. 10:16.

free to follow it or not. If the interior voice imposes it on us at a given moment, we shall be obliged to do it under pain of resisting the will of God and making ourselves unworthy to enter into His rest because we have a hardened heart. Others do not have this obligation because the will of God does not impose it on them or because, perhaps, He imposes on them the contrary, for all the strings of the lyre do not have to give off the same note. It does not matter to us to know what God exacts of others but only to be prompt to execute what He demands of us. "I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me." [22] So it is that each one by following his vocation or the divine motion and inspiration will become a worthy member of Christ, remaining in the post which has been assigned to him and faithfully fulfilling his respective mission.[23]

In this way the true saints have proceeded and will always proceed. Without copying one another but each one offering an original and singular aspect, they all become worthy sons of God because they know how to let themselves be fashioned, carried, moved, directed, and animated in all things by His Spirit. Here, then, is the great secret of sanctity: to deny oneself in order to do the divine will in all things and through all things as it is manifested to each one and in each instance.[24] This is why all the saints are intimately

22 John 21:22.

23 Thus is explained how in some what is a great fault is in others nothing more than an imperfection, if even that. What is good in an adolescent or child or at most constitutes imperfections which are proper to that age and which disappear with that age, would be a reprehensible fault in an adult. The same thing is true of the various ages and conditions of the spiritual life.

24 Caussade, *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* II, chap. 12: "The divine action beholds in the Word the idea after which you ought to be formed and this example is always before it. It sees in the Word all that is necessary for the sanctification of every soul. The holy Scriptures contain one part, and the workings of the divine action in the interior of the soul, after the example set forth by the Word, complete the work. . . . The wisdom of the just soul consists in being content with what is intended for it, in confining itself within the boundary of its path,: and not trespassing beyond its limit. It is not inquisitive about God's ways of acting, but is content as regards itself with the arrangements of His will, making no effort to discover its meaning by comparisons or conjectures, but only desiring to understand what each moment reveals. It listens to the voice of the Word when it sounds in the depths of the heart, it does not inquire as to what the divine Spouse has said to others, but is satisfied with what it receives for itself, so that moment by moment it becomes, in this way, divinised without its knowledge. It is thus that the divine Word converses with His spouse, by the solid effects of His action which the spouse without scrutinizing curiously, accepts with loving gratitude. '. . . We must make use only of that which God sends us to do or to suffer, and not forsake this

related and feel this solidarity, because they really perfect one another and call upon one another. Together they form a marvelous harmonious whole which is the body of the almost transfigured spouse of Christ.[25] But the many Christians who do not abandon themselves to God and thus resist the voice and inspirations of the Holy Ghost, are always a heavy weight on the others and on the Church as a whole, which, like the woman in the Apocalypse, cries travailing in birth and cries to be delivered.[26] The Church is always suffering the pains of this parturition in which she strives to give birth for God to the innumerable sons who, by resisting the vivifying Spirit, do not become spiritually formed but always remain diseased or monstrosities, because they do not let Christ be formed in them.[27]

The ill adapted member who lacks the spirit of charity and self-abnegation and does not adapt himself with the others to contribute with them to the common good fails in everything. He labors and suffers with little fruit and he causes others to suffer greatly. By not aiding them as he should, he hinders them. Therefore, when

divine reality to occupy our minds with the historical wonders of the divine work instead of gaining an increase of grace by our fidelity.

"The marvels of this work, of which we read for the purpose of satisfying our curiosity, often only tend to disgust us with things that seem trifling but by which, if we do not despise them, the divine love effects very great things in us. Fools that we are! We admire and bless this divine action in the writings relating its history, and when it is ready to continue this writing on our hearts, we keep moving the paper and prevent it writing by our curiosity, to see what it is doing in and around us. Pardon, divine love, these defects; I can see them all in myself, for I am not yet able to understand how to let You act. So far I have not allowed myself to be cast into the mould. I have run through all Your workshops and have admired all Your works, but have not as yet, by abandonment, received even the bare outlines of Your pencil. . . . I will now become Your disciple and will frequent no other school than Yours. . . . For love of You and to discharge my debts I will confine myself to the one essential business, that of the present moment, and thus enable You to act."

25 Joly, *Psychology of the Saints,* chap. 2: "In the life of the Church there are found lineages of saints who personify, some affective and tender action, others energetic action and the vigorous spirit of propaganda. Can we not contrast St. Francis of Assisi with St. Dominic, St. Bonaventure with St. Thomas, St. Vincent de Paul with St. Ignatius, as we contrast Bossuet with Fenelon? . . The difference is that in the saints diversity does not break out in struggles and controversies, but rather in the need which they feel of relying on others and of mutually aiding one another. If Bossuet and Fenelon, besides being great geniuses, had been true saints, instead of writing against each other they would have felt the urgent need of uniting and each one accepting from the other what he himself lacked."

26 Apoc. 12:2.

27 Gal. 4:19.

he is so maladjusted that he does nothing to further his destiny, he must be replaced by others; if he is healthy, he can at times be reduced to an inferior role and be used for a lower end. Otherwise he will have to be eliminated or amputated so that he will not hinder others and do them harm.

On the other hand, among those members who are well adapted, some suffer little and work much by means of the help which they receive from others; others who are perfect in their class suffer and work continually without any fruit being apparent, for their mission is to work and suffer for others. They are protective organs, organic defenses, which are as necessary as they are hidden. Some preside and govern with glory, others are subordinated and obey with docility. Some are hidden in the brain or the heart, ever watching over the common good and invisibly emanating a prodigious vital activity; others, under their impulse, are occupied and consumed in external works. But all these offices and ministries are necessary, and each organ has a merit in proportion to its services. That member which serves for nothing (in the divine eyes, that is, for human eyes judge very differently) is an unfaithful servant and will be cast into the outer darkness. A debtor to the benefits of its companions and lacking the bowels of mercy to compassionate with them and cooperate with them, it will have to pay the debt in the obscure prison until the last penny.[28]

Each organ must sacrifice itself for the sake of its proper function and live only for that, because in that is contained its reason for being. It is only that it may contribute to the common good by fulfilling its function faithfully that it receives such a variety of services from the rest of the members. If this is true of the ordinary simple faithful, it is truer of those who are especially consecrated in one way or other to the divine service, and for that end they receive special benefits or alms. But if instead of identifying themselves with their office and thinking only of the fulfillment of their ministry in the house of God, they rather think of themselves and make themselves their own goal instead of means, and appropriate to themselves for their own personal and human increase the services which they receive, then the more benefits they accumulate, the greater will be their degradation and so much the

28 Matt. 18:32-34; 25:24-30.

more inapt do they render themselves for the performance of their respective offices. They hypertrophy themselves as human organs and atrophy as divine organs, changing the spirit into flesh, and the grace of God into lechery. The more important or centrally located the organ or partial organ which accumulates benefits to the detriment of its function, the more is it perverted and the greater the unbalance, upheaval, and weakness which it causes in the mystical body.[29]

But the organ that is identified with its function and that grows only in and through that function, redounds with energies. Possessing the life of the composite, it functions spontaneously and automatically, for its reason for being is to depend on its function. Therefore it has no time to reflect or introspect on itself. It does not think of self or realize its own merits. It is absorbed only in the faithful performance of its mission in which it finds all its glory. This same thing happens with natural organs which are centrally located and act as regulators. They function automatically and tend to their object with complete forgetfulness of self. The same thing happens, to some extent, in social organisms so far as they resemble natural organisms. And such should always be the case in the mystical organism of the Church which is truly real and physiological, unlike the purely social organisms. In social organisms, which are purely psychological, excessive specialization can make an individual incapable of performing the other functions which are indispensable for the attainment of his proper goal, from which he can never abdicate, because he is a member of the organism precisely to foster the attainment of the end and not to impede it. But in the Church, whose solidarity equals and surpasses that of natural organisms, each member is better able to attain his proper end and realize his individual perfection when the organic whole has more solidarity and when the particular member more intimately and more perfectly lives the life of the whole and is more identified

28 We see the same things in many human societies which are infected with the cancer of bureaucracy wherein those who should simply be means are posited as ends. There accumulates a wide variety of useless employments, and great sums of money are expended. This, however, is not for the benefit of the common good, but only to maintain and effect the prestige of certain organs which formerly were perhaps important but now are without any function. When those organs display greater splendor and when they would have others consider them of great importance, their role of parasite is the more pernicious.

with the order of its own function which places it in intimate contact with the other members. The great evils which the Church has had to suffer come precisely from the fact that certain important organs thought too much of themselves, their human grandeur, and forgot the sacrifices which their ministry imposed on them for the honor of God and the good of Christianity. They were too much taken up with the accumulation of benefits and forgetful of the right performance of their offices. They degraded themselves as organs or members of the Church in order to figure as great men of their century. As a result they were transformed into parasites and false shepherds who, instead of giving their life for their sheep, impoverished them in order to prosper and increase themselves, without any profit to the flock of the Lord. To such as these He threatens terrible punishments through His prophet Ezechiel: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves: should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? You ate the milk, and you clothed yourself with the wool, and you killed that which was fat: but My flock you did not feed. . . . I will require My flock at their hand." [30]

The inertia of these organs, degraded by hypertrophy, is compensated by others who are filled with the spirit of charity and sacrifice. By their abundant virtues and graces they supply for what is wanting in their neighbors. Thus organic equilibrium is restored when anything has disturbed it, and the organism is maintained in a holy harmony.

Those who accuse the Church of paralyzing piety with external practices and human intermediaries and who think that this impedes the adoration in Spirit and in truth and the direct intercourse between the soul and God ignore not only this marvelous economy of the organization of the mystical body of Jesus Christ which was so much spoken of by the Apostle but also the needs of the human state.[31] God works immediately in all the faithful, as the soul does in the body, but only on condition that the members are united and subordinated to the directive organs and each one exercises its proper function in works proportionate to its condition.

To prescind from external practices which maintain our activity,

80 Ezech. 34:2-10.

81 Cf. Faber, *All for Jems,* chap. 4.

arouse fervor, and visibly tighten the relations among the faithful, is to quench the fire of the spirit and also to loosen or break the bonds of peace and charity. Normally man cannot work without the body, and in all his mental operations he must make use of the senses. What Protestant, with all his pretensions of pure spiritualism, has arrived at the liberty of spirit and the high state of contemplation of our mystics who were so attached to the practices of the Church and so submissive to authority? [32] The true saints lived intimately united and subordinated to the Church because they knew very well that in her they could find life and that only in her was the Holy Ghost with all His graces.[33]

[32] The great contemplatives were accustomed to follow faithfully the course of the liturgical year, contemplating those mysteries which were being celebrated by the Church. Yet in these contemplatives the Protestants themselves recognize the most faithful expression of the Christian spirit. That is why, as Fonsegrive notes (*Le Catholicisme,* p. 45), "the rites, formulas, and sacraments have as their object and effect the increase of religious life. The mystics, arriving at the highest grades of contemplation, are so united to the life of the Church that her sacraments and all her external formulary do nothing less than vivify their interior flame. They rejoice in supreme liberty and admirable autonomy because their communication with Jesus Christ and the Church is so complete and full that their will is that of the Church. They see the daughter in the Father, and in their immediate union with the heavenly Father they sense the reason for being united with the Church. So it is easy to see in the great mystics how ample is their liberty in the midst of their perfect docility."

Blessed Angela of Foligno, *op. cit.,* chap. 62: "Do not trust those who pretend to have the spirit of liberty as long as their life is a living contradiction to Christianity. Jesus Christ, the founder of the law. subjected Himself to it, and being free, He made Himself a slave. His disciples should not seek liberty in license which breaks the divine law."

Imitation of Christ, III, 13: "He who tries to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from grace, and he who wishes to have things in private, loses the common possessions."

[33] St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.,* Ill, 24: "The Church vivified by the Holy Ghost has the mission of vivifying in turn her members. Through her is established the continual communication between Jesus Christ and men. She possesses the Holy Ghost, the pledge of immortality and salvation, and she fortifies our faith and guides us and aids us in our rising up to God. God, as St. Paul says, has established His apostles in the first place in His Church, in the second place the prophets, in the third the doctors and other organs of operation of the Holy Ghost, from whom are excluded necessarily all who are separated from the Church and by their conduct they pronounce their own condemnation. For where the Church is, there is the Holy Ghost, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and the mainstay of all graces. . . . Those who have no part in this Spirit, are not permitted to drink the milk of life from the breasts of the common mother nor to taste the waters of the ineffable fount of immortality."

St. Augustine, *In Joan.,* 24:13: "Only the body of Christ lives by the Spirit of Christ. . . . He who wishes to live, has the wherewithal to live. Let him approach; let him believe; let him be incorporated, and he will be vivified."

St. Catherine of Siena told Blessed Raymond that God had manifested to her in his inaccessible light "the necessity of the holy Church and how no one could taste the divine beauty in the abyss of the Trinity without the means of the Church, His sweet spouse. For all must enter by the gate of Christ crucified, and this gate is found nowhere else but in the holy Church. I saw that this spouse gives life because she has so much in herself that there is no one who can kill her. And I saw that she gives strength and light and that there is no one who can weaken or blind her. I saw, finally, that her fruits will never fall away but will always increase." [34]

Weiss [35] observes:

> The saints have always been the most faithful sons of the Church, the most zealous guardians of her rights, and have observed her least precepts most scrupulously. . . . The more united anyone is to the Church, the more certain he is of union with her Founder and Lord, the author of all graces and the model and end of all sanctity. Supernatural virtue and the certainty of salvation diminish in the same degree that one alienates himself from the Church. The more tightly one is bound with the mystical body of Jesus Christ, the more he adheres to this divine Head, by which the whole body is influenced through its ligaments and joints in order to grow according to God.[38]

On the other hand, not all the members are in the brain, nor can all souls reach the heights of contemplation from the very beginning. And even the few who actually do attain it, when they lack the lights which enable them to work as angels, have to descend to work as men, making use of the resources at their disposal, under pain of not working well or becoming beasts, and causing the spirit to be extinguished.

Christian subordination does not restrict, but it directs, stimulates, and encourages. It makes each organ aid rather than impede the rest and it makes all of them continue to adapt and perfect themselves according to their respective destinies. As long as they proceed thus, good direction consists in observing and letting progress continue, taking care to stimulate only when necessary or to set it right when

84 Letter 105.
80 *Op. cit.*, X, 13.
88 Col. 3:19.

it is misguided.[37] The good spiritual director takes care to restrain the legitimate impulses which animate souls that have already been tested but that desire to convince themselves that they are moved by the Holy Ghost. His work would be impeded, so far as lies in man's poxver, if the director were to spend unnecessary efforts testing and resisting.[38] Seeing that souls are animated and on the right path, he is content to encourage them, without meddling in anything that may perturb them. He who knows that all souls do not travel along the same way, must let each one go its own way, as long as it travels well and must not impose too many restrictions and rules, though these may have been very useful for beginners. To act otherwise would be to try to tow them against the wind of the Spirit and to impede their progress rather than assist it. Interfering with the work of the Holy Ghost, they would oblige Him to complain: They have destroyed my vineyard.[39] Therefore St. Ignatius prudently counsels, "Leave the soul with God." As Lallemant points out, he also "lays greater stress on the interior law which the Holy Spirit writes in the heart, than on the constitution and exterior rules." [40]

Those who try to subject all souls, however advanced they may be, to identical procedures, are the worst kind of directors, for they ignore specialization.[41] Souls already highly specialized have, under direction and prudent vigilance, remarkable initiative in which "the spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is

87 Palaphox, *Varan de descos,* III, 3: "In this state the soul will have such a good Master that by letting itself he governed by its holy impulses and divine inspirations, it will not need our advice."

88 With good reason docs the *Didache* say: "Do not test the prophet who is already proven but hear him with respect and receive him as the Lord as long as he imitates His works."

89 Jer. ii: io.

*° Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* II, chap. *6,* art. 5.

41 Surin, *Catéch.,* II, 2: "We do not condemn the precepts and methods which are useful for forming souls and accustoming them to holy exercises. But they must not be used violently or inflicted on souls when the Holy Ghost by His grace moves them to proceed more freely. This happens when He calls them to a sweet repose which is the true fruit of the spirit of piety and makes one's own action cease so that God can work. Then the soul must accept this liberty which the divine Spirit grants to it and enter into that familiarity which is so highly recommended by the saints. . . . This will make their commerce with God sweet and pleasing . . . and easy to progress more. Thus in a short time they will acquire the gift of prayer, because this procedure makes them docile to the motions and inspirations of the Holy Ghost who, finding nothing more definite than their great will to please God and converse with Him, breathes where He will and moves the soul in conformity with His desire."

judged of no man." 42 Only when they notice a disorder do the central and superior organs have the right to moderate or check the inferiors just as they ought to stimulate and urge them when they notice any slothfulness or heaviness.

But spiritual souls show themselves to be animated by the true Spirit in hearing and obeying the lawful representatives of God. "He that knoweth God, heareth us." 43 Although these sometimes through their carelessness can be mistaken, all will work out at the end to the profit of him who follows them in good faith, for the obedient man is always victorious,44 and the submission of one's own will is the greatest of sacrifices. But disobedience is like the crime of idolatry,45 for the disobedient man prefers his own will to the divine will, and by his insubordination he tends to tear the mystical body of the Savior and he pours forth, renders useless, and despises His blood which is communicated to us through the sacramental organs on the condition that one is in perfect union with that body from whose invisible Head our hierarchical superiors receive all power and authority by which they command us. He who is not subject to them and does not adhere to them, and especially he who does not respect the Supreme Pontiff, disdains and positively resists Christ Himself.46

Therefore the great servants of God, filled with the Spirit of wisdom and a Christian sense, lament the evils of the Church, the tenderest and holiest of mothers, and they understand the evils of

42 I Cor. 2:15.
43 I John 4:6.
44 Prov. 21:28.
45 I Kings 15:22 f.
46 Luke 10:16; I Pet. 4:10!.; I Cor. 4:1; II Cor. 3:6; 5:20; 13:3. St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 210: "If you are against the Church, how can you participate in the blood of the Son of God? For the Church is nothing other than Christ Himself. He it is who gives and administers to us the sacraments which vivify us through the life which they receive from the blood of Christ, for before this blood was given to us, neither virtue nor anything else was sufficient to give us lasting life. Then how can we be so rebellious that we reject that blood? And if we say: I do not reject the blood, I say that is not true; because he who rejects the vicar, rejects the blood, and he who acts contrary to the one, acts contrary to the other, for the one in united and incorporated in the other. How can you say that if you offend the body you do not offend also the blood contained in that body? Do you not know that the Church, of which he is the visible head, is a mystical body which has in it the blood of Christ? On the other hand, if you reconcile yourself with the pope, you will make of yourself a grafting by planting yourself and grafting yourself on the tree of life."

their neighbors as if they were their own. In nothing do they suffer so much as in those insubordinations which cause a dislocation and separation of the members of Jesus Christ;[47] the terrible pains and sad afflictions which they suffer enable them to be configured with Him in the whole series of the mysteries of His sacred passion. In the Garden our loving Redeemer sweat blood when He saw how His blood would be despised and poured forth in vain by the dissensions and rebellions of so many ungrateful sons and how they would profane the sacrament of His love which is the very center of the union between souls and the heart of His holy Church. But in that same Garden He was comforted by an angel who showed Him the copious fruits of blessings which His blood would produce in all those who would receive it with love and how there would spring forth from His wounds so many fountains of life and grace. Thereby thousands and thousands of martyrs and confessors, virgins and pious widows, would be filled forever with vigor and fortitude and merit the eternal crown and by which the purification of souls in purgatory would be shortened.

The three Churches—militant, suffering, and triumphant—form the complete body of Christ, and in a form conducive to these three states they receive the influxes from His divine head and the vivification of His Spirit. They are all solidly united by means of that superior solidarity which is called the communion of saints and thus they all share in the same goods.[48] What we do or suffer in a Christian manner benefits all the sons of God, wherever they may be. Our good works, prayers, and privations, however small, aid

47 Weiss, *op. cit., X,* 3, app. i: "The saints experienced grace so keenly that their souls seemed transfigured. All their members were agitated with emotion in the presence of God . . . and they felt in themselves the pulsations of the heart of the Savior. . . . They were so united to Jesus Christ that sin, the great destroyer of this union, seemed to them to be an act which tore members from the Savior. . . . Any injustice or violence committed against one of the faithful was in their eyes a crime committed against Jesus Christ Himself."

48 Sauvé, *op. cit.,* p. 46: "Nothing is more sublime than this flowing back and forth of prayers and graces which proceed from the heart of Jesus to the Church militant, triumphant, and suffering; from the three Churches to the heart and Jesus, and from one Church to another. It is certain that the aspect of purgatory is not the least sublime in this mystery and it is the most moving, for souls suffer much more there than in this vale of tears. Few souls have been as immolated here below as St. Margaret Mary. She said, however, that the terrible impressions made on her by the infinite holiness was no more than a little token of what those souls suffer there. Their sorrow, so remarkably profound and resigned, will move us all the more as we share more in the heart of Jesus."

our neighbors, gladden the dwellers of heaven, and alleviate the lot of the suffering souls. And the prayers of these souls, especially the triumphant souls, aid those of us who are still on the journey.[48] Finally, the merits of all the just are gathered with those of Christ, by whose virtue they were gained, and jointly they serve for our benefit. Therefore the Roman Pontiff, as supreme dispenser of the divine treasures, can decree the honors which are owed to the saints and can apply indulgences to the souls in purgatory, for whatever he looses or binds on earth is loosed or bound in heaven.[50]

Therefore also the Lord will ask of His unfaithful servants and ministers a strict account of their bad administration of His treasures, of the graces which they could have fostered and made fructify but which through their negligence remained useless or produced but little fruit. He will also demand an account of the souls that by their negligence, imprudence, or culpable ignorance lost or did not increase what they should have, demanding at their hands the blood of those who perished through their fault. On the other hand, He will recompense with divine generosity the diligent and faithful servants who knew how to fructify the talents He confided to them. The least service done for the Church will receive a glorious reward just as the slightest injury will receive the most severe chastisements. The Lord will not permit anyone to look upon His spouse with indifference. He will terribly castigate those who do not love her, for they abhor Himself, the Savior of all men who saves them through her. What they do to the Church, they do to Him who is its head and they do to all Christians who are its members. He who does not love her, cannot love his neigh-

49 In the life of Ven. Francises of the Blessed Sacrament, who was favored with many visions of the saints, one can see how they are greatly interested in us and especially in the mission which they had received from God during their lifetime. So the apostles and doctors often recommended that she pray for the needs of the Church. St. Catherine of Siena, as an apostle and doctor, made the same recommendation to her, for she had in her life been interested in a general reform. The holy founders asked her to pray for their respective orders; St. Thomas of Canterbury asked her to pray for the conversion of England. One can also see the many favors, consolations, and encouragements which she received from the souls in purgatory and how well they repaid her for the many sacrifices she offered foi them. "They take such good care of me," she says, "that I know not how to repay them. When they see that I am sad, . . . they come to console and encourage me and they call me their friend and benefactress. I owe very much to the souls in purgatory."

60 Matt. 16:19; 18:18.

bors as he ought nor truly desire their salvation, and thus he shows that he completely lacks divine charity.

APPENDIX

1. Sorrows and Wounds of Dissension

Catherine Emmerich, *Passion of Our Lord,* I:

I saw the Church as the body of Jesus and a multitude of men who were separated from her and they were tearing off great pieces of her living flesh. . . . Jesus looked upon them with tenderness and wept to see them lost. He who had given Himself to us as food in the Blessed Sacrament, in order to unite in the body of the Church, His spouse, men who are divided and separated from the Church, saw Himself despised in this same body. His principal work of love, the Eucharist, where all men should be perfected in unity, would be turned, through the malice of false doctors, into a stumbling block and separation. In this way I saw entire peoples torn away from His breast and deprived of participation in that treasure of grace bestowed on the Church. Finally I saw all those separated from her submerged in incredulity, superstition, heresy, and false philosophy. Filled with fury, they banded together to attack the Church, aroused by the serpent which had been raised up in the midst of them; it was the same as if Jesus Himself had been torn to pieces.

2. The Fruits of the Passion

Catherine Emmerich, *ibid:*

The angels presented to Jesus in the garden all the legions of the blessed who, joining their combats to the merits of the Passion, would be united through Him to the heavenly Father. It was a beautiful and consoling vision. He saw salvation and sanctification flowing as a torrential river from the dam of redemption which was opened after His death. The Apostles, the disciples, the virgins and holy women, all the martyrs, the confessors, the hermits, Popes and bishops, and a multitude of religious, in a word, the whole army of the blessed was present to His sight. All wore crowns on their heads and the flowers of these crowns differed in color, form, odor, and virtue according to the variety of their sufferings, combats, victories with which they had gained eternal glory. All their lives and all their actions, all their merits and all their efforts, and all the glory of their triumphs, come solely from their union with the merits of

Jesus Christ. The reciprocal action and influence which all those saints exercised on one another and the manner in which they shared in the one fountain of the Blessed Sacrament and the Passion of the Lord was a tender and marvelous spectacle. Nothing in them seemed fortuitous. Their works, their martyrdoms, their victories, their aspects, their vesture, all, though greatly diversified, was blended in an infinite harmony and unity. And this unity amid variety was produced by the rays of the unique sun, through the Passion of the Lord, of the Word made flesh in whom was the life and light of men which shone in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. It was the communion of the future saints which passed before the spirit of the Savior.

3. Graces Which Are Lost or Badly Used

Brentano, *Life of Eimnerich,* p. 44:

Various symbols represented to her the negligences of the Church militant and its servants. She saw how many graces were not cultivated or fostered and how many had been lost. She was taught that the Redeemer had placed each year in His Church a complete treasure of merits

(and they are sufficient to raise up the most fallen man or to free from Purgatory the most forgotten soul) should be sought with greater energy. The Church militant was punished for these negligences and infidelities of her servants by oppression from her enemies and temporal humiliations.

4. Love for the Church

St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 33: "You cannot have a desire for the salvation of souls unless you have a desire for the holy Church, because she is the universal body of all the creatures which participate in the brightness of the holy faith. . . . If the Church is reformed, there will follow benefits for the whole world. . . . Anyone who serves her with reverence will be rewarded for the slightest service done."

The Church as the Garden and Living Temple of God

We have seen that the Apostle makes frequent use of the anthropological organic symbol and endeavors to show the great diversity of ministries which must be performed in the Church of God. From this symbol he strives to deduce the obligations of all the faithful

and with them the whole of Christian moral and all progress in the spiritual life. For everything can be reduced to this statement: "Conduct yourself as living members of Christ, animated with His Spirit." It is not necessary for us to dwell on the visible growth of this mystical organization, but it is well to recall some of the other symbols of the Church, since the one perfects and clarifies the other. In this way we shall see how the Church ought to grow and how necessary are solidarity, mutual dependence, multiple correlation, and perfect hierarchical subordination.

In the sociological symbol the Church appears as a kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God on earth. Whence it requires a perfect ruler with the corresponding ministers and a visible representative of God.[51]

In the agricultural symbol the Church figures as a field planted by the heavenly Father who sends His workers to cultivate it. In that field is the select vineyard and the garden of the delights of the Lord. It is also the mystical wine cellar where entirely spiritual souls are inebriated with divine charity which is prepared for them there. In that field, that garden, that vineyard, there are plants and flowers to be cared for and there is one who cares for them and cultivates them. The true caretaker and gardener is the heavenly Father who makes them grow, but He also sends workers with the power to plant and transplant, to engraft, prune, purify, and water.[52] Yet all this is the agriculture of the Lord, and His helpers also are His plantings.[53] The just man is like the tree planted near the stream of running waters.[54]

The souls which are more distinguished by the flowers of their virtues are transplanted to the garden of delights so that there they may blossom and fructify with greater luxuriance and exhale a heavenly fragrance,[55] which is the good odor of Christ with which they perfume the world and save it from corruption.

All the plants which grow and fructify in this field and especially

51 "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4:1). "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us. . . . Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me?" (II Cor. 5:20; 13:3.)

82 Jer. 1:10.

8SI Cor. 3:6-9.

84Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8.

88Ecclus. 24:17-23; 39:17-19.

in the garden are copiously irrigated with the mystical waters that spring forth from the fountains of the Savior.[56] As organic associations they protect one another and foster one another's growth. The more vigorous give something of their strength for the benefit of the others because the breathing of the Holy Ghost, which gives life to all of them, thus distributes it for the common good. Therefore some of the plants are carried from the garden to the field, not to be cast away, but to be considered by God, because they participate greatly in Him, as fountains of salvation for others. They feel themselves alienated from Him who feeds among the lilies and they do not realize that they are now configured with Him who is the flower of the fields and the lily of the valleys and that they perform His office of savior by living among the thorns.[87] He is the true vine on which are engrafted all the branches or saplings which are able to produce fruit.[88] So we return again to the perfect union and solidarity of some of the faithful with others and of all of them together in the common trunk who is our divine Head, Jesus Christ, Son of the living God. The dry or sterile branches are cut off and cast into the fire. The plants of the garden which do not flower abundantly to beautify and perfume that garden are unworthy of remaining there and are cast into the fields where, through lack of care, they are in great danger of withering away or becoming the food of beasts.[59] Then many other wild flowers are translated to the garden to take their place.

Frequently the Church is also considered a spiritual house or the living temple of the Holy Ghost who constructs it little by little as a dwelling place of God.[60] The Architect, who is at the same time the cornerstone, is the incarnate Word. With Him are associated many workers and secondary architects who under His direction and influence build so much better when they try to edify or sanctify themselves. They are said to work for the edification of the Church when they work for their own sanctification, when they adhere more and more to this living cornerstone. All should build solidly on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets of

88 Isa. 12:3.
81 Cant. 2: i f.
88 John 15:1-16.
89 Isa. 5:1-5.
801 Pet. 2:5; I Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:20-22.

the Lord who now form one thing with Him. Those apostles exist now and they will exist forever because there will always be those in the Church who, by their ministerial succession and sacramental power, inherit the apostolic power. There will always be many souls filled with God who, through a charismatic communication, will inherit, as did Eliseus from Elias, the spirit of those prophets who so abounded and found themselves so copiously enriched and were of such great influence in the edification of the primitive Church where they figured at the side of the apostles.[61] These new prophets of Jesus Christ are today the invisible mainstay of His holy Church while the successors of the twelve apostles and all the other ministers of the sanctuary aid the Church visibly. Theirs is the mission of governing; but those who are filled with the Holy Ghost, whatever their state or condition, are the ones who truly edify the Church.[62]

That the edifice may grow solidly in conformity with the divine plan and there may not be anything to be cast out, the various stones must occupy the place which belongs to them. And for this they must be chiseled and polished in such a way that they will be well adjusted and not misfits and at the same time will aid and adhere to one another, suffering one another with all patience and being united one to another with the bonds of peace and the cement of charity. Only thus can there be solidarity, unity, and beauty.[63] And only thus can souls be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone: in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord." [64]

61 Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; I Cor. 12:28.

62 I Cor. 14:4: "He that prophesieth, edifieth the Church." Suso, *Dialogue,* XIII, 9: "Upon these souls, as upon solid columns, God sustains His Church. Without them Christianity would perish and the entire world would fall into the net of the devil."

Such aid is given especially by those who possess in a high degree certain charisms of the Holy Ghost and transmit them to a whole spiritual progeny (Isa. 59:21) by forming a religious congregation which is perpetuated for the good of Christianity and the edification of the entire Church. Therefore are the great religious founders placed in the columns of the Vatican, as true foundations of the temple of St. Peter.

63 St. Magdalen of Pazzi, *op. cit.,* IV, 11: "In order to construct a beautiful edifice," said our Lord to the saint, "it is necessary that the stones be placed one on the other, that they mutually support one another, and that they be joined together by means of cement. So, in order to construct the mystical Jerusalem, it is necessary that souls, who are the stones, be united by means of peace and that they support one another, bearing one another's defects."

64 Eph. 2:20-22.

Hennas, a disciple of the apostles, admirably develops this simile in the famous vision of the tower which represented the Church. This tower was built upon the waters, being constructed bit by bit on Jesus Christ and the apostles who together form a monolithic foundation. The construction will continue until the end of the world, and the world must end when it is finished.®§ For this work the Lord commands His ministers to find new stones in far-off and inaccessible quarries. He charges them to dig them out, to select and transport them, to chisel them, to burnish them and polish them well. For this there are special workers who reject the unfit and accept the good. Then the virtues give to the stones the necessary luster and color so that they can be used in the construction. Placed in their respective positions, they appear to be so well fit into place and so united that they form a beautiful monolith, all brilliant and of the same color.

Now and again the Lord comes to examine the work and to test the stones with the rod of His power. As a result of this testing, some become even finer, more brilliant, and better united so that there is now no sign of a juncture between them and other stones, no contrast or diversity of color. Others, on the contrary, crumble or are blackened, so that the Lord commands that they be cast into the abyss as being totally useless. Still others, although more or less delicate, do not harmonize or are maladjusted; they appear discolored, dull, rounded or slightly cracked. The Lord commands that these be taken out and put to one side to see if they can be used later. Meanwhile He sends His workers to find new stones at a far distance in the mountains and valleys, and, where they are least expected, many excellent stones are found. Further, when the ministers see that some of the stones in the vi-

65 Hermas saw (*Shepherd,* III, 8-10) that this mysterious tower is being constructed on the waters because the water of baptism is the only fountain of life and salvation. It was constructed of square stones, white and perfectly joined together, which "represented the apostles, bishops, doctors, and deacons who discharged their ministries with purity and of whom some have died but others still live." Other stones represented the martyrs and holy faithful. At the base of the tower could be seen the stones that were rejected as useless, the false faithful, that is, those who believed with hypocrisy, without abandoning their evil works; those who believed and did not persevere; and those who, having faith, denied the Lord in the moment of tribulation. For these, he says, there is no salvation. But between the saints and the reprobate are the believers who, having sinned, desire to be converted. These, if they are converted promptly, will be accepted for the tower. But if the tower is finished before they are converted, there will be no place for them.

cinity are abandoned, though they seem good enough, they beg the Lord to let them polish and work over them carefully to see if those stones can be put to some service, without going to the distant quaries. Having obtained permission, they put themselves to the task and they then discover that the rounded and dull stones are not fine. Many of them crack and become useless, and others are incapable of any luster. But some of them can be worked upon and polished and finally they are of some use for a less important place in the inside of the tower.

The rounded stones are usually very fine, for they have been tried with the water of many tribulations. But they are too self-willed and they do not wish to lose anything of their natural goodness. But seeing that they are nevertheless so fine in texture, the ministers polish them carefully and in this way, at the cost of much effort, they wear them down and shape them so that finally the majority of them are used to good advantage in the tower, either on the outside or within. Although much reduced in size and placed in a less important place, they can now withstand the testing of the divine rod. But some of these stones never let themselves be worked upon and polished but they crack and become useless and they have to be rejected definitively and thrown into the abyss.

In this remarkable simile is clearly represented what happens to souls that make up the mystical tower of the Church which is able to withstand all the attacks of the world and hell. It is the living temple of the Lord, the heavenly Jerusalem, at once the mansion and spouse of the divine Lamb, full and radiant with His eternal brightness. Only by labors, tortures, and violence are those living stones rightly prepared to occupy their assigned places.[88] Those which are of no use for that office, must be worn away still more to be adjusted to an inferior role under pain of being rejected entirely. Those which are used for the exterior of the tower, in the walls of the new Jerusalem, are at once the most beautiful and durable.[87] They withstand all the trials and attacks without suf-

ee Office of the Dedication of a Church:

Tunsionibus, pressuris
Expoliti lapides,
Suis cooptantur locis
Per manus artificis.

βτ Apoc. 21:10-24.

fering the least harm, without losing their luster, and without being soiled. They suffer becaùse it is their mission to suffer and protect, but their sufferings make them still more precious.

The union of the stones is effected through the blood of the Lamb mixed with charity and the sufferings of souls charged to unite themselves in His passion. The rocks are all the faithful, and they occupy a place which is the more important as they are more consecrated to the divine service or more adorned with virtues and graces. The workers are the ministers of the sanctuary. St. Catherine says in this regard:

> Since God knows how to build well and to grant us whatever is necessary, when He saw that water is not good for compressing and mixing the lime to hold the stones together, He gave us the Blood of His only-begotten Son for the water. . . . Let us admire the inestimable charity of God who, seeing that the water of the holy prophets was not living and did not give life, sent us His own Son with the power and virtue of His love and placed Him as a stone in our edifice without which we could not live. . . . He made Him jointly master and servant and a worker on this edifice and He mixed His Blood with the lime so that nothing would be lacking for our edification. Let us be glad and rejoice, for we have such a sweet Master, stone, and worker and He has made us a wall with His Blood and has made our wall so strong that neither the demons, nor creatures, nor hail, nor tempest, nor wind can ever move it if we ourselves do not wish it.[88]

Speaking along these same lines, St. Magdalen of Pazzi says:

> In order to build the mystical Jerusalem the Holy Ghost comes and selects industrious masters, zealous workers, and dexterous stone masons. . . . The architect is the eternal Word. The masters of the work are the priests, without whom no stone could be put in place. The workers who continually carry the materials to the structure are the confessors, and the stones which should serve as ornaments are the contemplative religious. The cement which holds them together is composed of the lime of the holy virgins, the sand of the holy hermits, and the blood of the immolated Lamb. But how many enemies rise up to destroy this edifice, the stability of which defies all their efforts! If it is shaken in any part, the fault must be placed not so much on the stones themselves as on the stonecutters and the lime. Ah, that Thy priests and spouses, My God,

88 Letter 34.

should think that they honor Thee in loving themselves and basely deceiving themselves![69]

APPENDIX

The Cultivation of the Garden of the Church

St. Magdalen of Pazzi writes *(ibid.)*:

I see the divine Spirit come forth from the bosom of the Father, enter into the side and heart of the Word, and then descend upon us. Oh, what riches He brings us! Blessed are those who receive Him! From the bosom of the Father He takes power and a treasure of graces more numerous than the stars of the heavens. From the side of the Word He takes a love more fruitful than the flowers of springtime. . . . I see Him speed through the heavens and the earth. I see Him cultivate the delicious garden of the Church. . . . His powerful breathing attracts to this garden certain plants from sterile and dry soil of infidelity. There they are watered by five streams, that is, the five wounds of the Word who waters them not with water, but with His own blood. The Holy Ghost takes what superabounds to the graces of His chosen ones and communicates them to these new plants because without this transfusion it would sometimes happen that the chosen ones, not being able to bear their heavy weight, althought it is a sweet weight, of heavenly graces, would be oppressed by them.

There are still other plants in this agreeable and fertile land of the humanity of the Word. The divine Spirit transplants them also, some because of their weakness, others because of their vigor which would make them fructify too quickly. The vine which matures too rapidly becomes sterile. God, who is eternal, desires that the creature, in His example, should work incessantly and perseveringly. He wishes that their works should be perfect, without any mixture of self-love. Therefore He sometimes puts it aside without withdrawing from it and plants it in the garden of His Church, where it shares more in aridity, that is, in the trials and tribulations which the Church has suffered and will always suffer. It there shares in the aridity of other plants and it communicates to them something of its own vigor. This transmission gives glory to God and benefit to souls.

The Holy Ghost also withdraws others from the humanity of the Word in order to give them to the human race. A friend who has precious fruits in his garden, however much he may esteem them, does not hesi-

[69] *Op. cit.,* III, 4.

tate to deprive himself of them to please his friend. And this is what the Holy Ghost does. When a soul is united to Him through love, He has great affection for it; but, wishing something for the human race, He puts this soul apart from Himself by the withdrawal of sensible graces, in order to give that soul to the world. The soul believes itself separated from God because now it no longer tastes Him, but it is then that the soul is most intimately united with God. Did not the Holy Ghost do the same thing with the Word when He took Him, so to speak, from the bosom of the Father in order to transplant Him in this miserable world and deliver Him into the hands of perverse Jews? But these did not know how to appreciate so inestimable a fruit. . . .

When the Holy Ghost descended for the first time on the apostles He gave them the power of transplanting all men in the garden of the Church. An immense grace of which many are deprived because of their ingratitude! But He is not content with transplanting them in the garden; He wishes that they pass from there to paradise, that is, to the religious state, and from there to the garden of the Friend, that is, the humanity of the Word, and not to rest until He has conducted them there . . . where He enables the soul to know His divine attributes and to teach it the truth.

Growth in Sanctity

Mystical progress is the only true and integral progress. It is the only one in which nature really attains the plenitude of its perfections at the same time that it is enriched with divine splendors. It is a continual increase of life and energies in which, growing in all things according to the true Exemplar, we can arrive at the status of the perfect man. By this progress is explained all development that takes place in the Church without any danger of falling into the modern aberrations which would reduce them to a series of contradictions and destructions. All true progress is the increasing manifestation of some aspect of the Christian life which always grows and is not a diminution or destruction. Therefore in the vital or mystical progress is contained all progress. This is the principle and end and supreme reason of all the rest, and not to grow in some way in the grace and knowledge of the Son of God is to flee from light and life and to advance along the path of darkness or into the shadows of death. Our only progress consists in pai ticipating more and more in the fullness of Him in whom was l iom the beginning the life which is the light of men; of l lim who ‹ .mu

into this world to be the only way which leads to the perfection of progress, the only truth which destroys error and makes men free, the only life by which one truly lives without walking in darkness, but proceeding as sons of the light who flee from the shadows of death.[70]

Growing in the divine life, one grows in all things. Without this growth, since one cannot remain stationary in this life, everything is retrogression and degeneration. Nevertheless there are some who think that, although all the members of the Church should increase in life, or what is the same, in virtue and sanctity, the Church itself cannot increase or mystically evolve, for it was holy from the very beginning and it is not to be supposed that now she would have greater saints or more abundant charisms than she had before. But then, neither can the Church be said to grow in unity and catholicity, for she was always, at least virtually, one and catholic. Nevertheless the Church does increase in these notes as she is extended and propagated and as, through great organic development, she fastens and tightens the bonds of solidarity of all the members among themselves and with the Head.

She should grow in all things because she must always be edified more and more. This edification is effected principally in charity and, therefore, in sanctity and justice. This is her primary end: the progressive sanctification of all her members. The Savior Himself came to give to all of us, and therefore to the composite of the mystical body, a life which is ever more abundant. He placed the fire of His Spirit on the earth, desiring that it be kindled and that this divine fire should increase more and more. He shed His precious blood through love of His Church in order to sanctify and purify it more and more until it would be totally pure and beautiful. For that reason the Church begs in her official prayers, for example, in that of Blessed Gregory X, "to receive ever new increases of faith and sanctity." He who is now holy must be sanctified yet more, and the just man must be progressively justified.[71] The Christian ideal is not a limited perfection but the true deification or the greatest possible assimilation and union with God. To achieve this we must strive to be identified in a certain manner with

70 Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:8-11.
71 Eccles. 7:17.

His infinite sanctity, letting ourselves fully possess His Spirit of sanctification and be configured in all things with the incarnate Word.

As a great number of the faithful is truly sanctified by realizing this sublime ideal, it is clear that the integral life and therefore the true sanctity of the whole mystical body are increased. However holy were the first organs, which had to serve as the firm foundation for her later development, the Church was still in a rudimentary state, like the grain of mustard seed. As she developed she manifested more and more her vitality, which consists especially in true sanctity. The first organs of that little body were of necessity embryonic and, no matter how much vitality they had and how much activity they manifested, they were not able to manifest fully the plenitude of life which was latent or contained in them. They had to wait until new organs appeared so that they could be developed and diversified according to the vital plan and to manifest themselves progressively. Thus we see how "the word of the Lord increased" with the increase of workers, as St. Luke says.[72]

During this development the perfection of the saints is effected more and more in the works of their ministry, and new and precious fruits of sanctification are continually appearing and ripening on this tree of life. We have seen how the intimate progress of the configuration of souls with the Savior is translated to the exterior in the increasing number of those who receive the stigmata. In each new saint we can say that there appears a new form of sanctity, and in all of them together is manifested more and more clearly the treasures of virtue and life which are buried in Jesus Christ.[73]

So it is that the entire organism of the Church is able to "grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every

[72] Acts 6:7. Rose, *Ades, ibid:* "The institution of the seven is a new phase for the Church and, by the addition of their activity to that of the twelve, the fervor of the Church and its propagation was increased."

[73] Olier, *Lettres,* II, 475: "In a certain sense the feast of All Saints seems to me to be greater than that of Easter or the Ascension because this mystery perfects our Lord. But Jesus as Head is not perfect except in union with all His members, who are the saints. . . . This feast is very glorious because it is an external manifestation of the life hidden in Jesus Christ, for all the excellency of the perfection of the saints is nothing more than an emanation of His Spirit poured forth on them."

part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity." [74]

Animated as it is with the Spirit of renewal and sanctification, it is ceaselessly being renewed and sanctified and as it proceeds ever in geometric progression, when some organ visibly disappears from it, some vital cell which is transfigured by passing into glory, then by a mysterious germination other cells appear to fill the empty place and to distribute the offices and powers of that which has disappeared, just as the powers and charisms of the apostles were by a vital law distributed among the pastors, doctors, and prophets. Thus the mystical body manifests in a fuller manner and in a more ample and varied way the powers that formerly were contained virtually in the primitive organ. Thus with each renewal the organism acquires an increase of actual life and of true sanctity. On the other hand, the organs which visibly disappear through their transfiguration do not thereby break their bonds with the mystical body nor cease to exert influence on it. Rather, since they are now perfect, they influence it in an invisible manner by their intercessions and the accumulation of their merits without being an impediment or causing a state of unbalance in the organism.

It is not true to say, then, that there will never be greater saints than the early saints, and it is not enough to say that no saint can compare with Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the apostles, and the early disciples, in order to prove that the Church does not progress in holiness nor evolve mystically. This would be to reduce the whole edifice to its most solid foundations and the heavenly Jerusalem to doors and walls and the quickly maturing tree which, with its leaves and mature fruits, gladdens the earth, to its primitive seed, as small as the grain of mustard seed. The numerous flocks of Christ, beautified with the blood of martyrs and the virtues of so many confessors and virgins would be reduced to the little flock of the primitive Church, and the whole brilliant mystical body of the Church, adult and robust, possessing various organs and a diversity of functions, would be reduced to the simple embryonic members. How is it possible that as the number of holy members has increased, with the prodigious and various forms of heroic virtues which they manifest, that the sanctity of the whole body would

[74] Eph. 4:16.

not also increase? And how is it possible that the body would not continue to increase in the measure that this number increases and the infirm or stained members are cured and cleansed, and that the whole organism should remain healthy and pure, without spot or stain?

Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Church, was and is always the Head of this mystical body which He directs and governs and keeps united. He distributes to it energies and graces; He watches over its prosperity; and with His Spirit He animates it and impels it to develop and grow in all things. He is with us today as yesterday and He will remain with us always,[75] according to His promise: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." [78] He gave solidity to the firm cement of the apostles, but these are not the entire tower or holy house of the Lord nor even its entire foundation. Aiding them, upon the Cornerstone, are all the new apostles and prophets in the Spirit.[77] He concentrated in them and in the first believers, as the embryonic organs, all the vital energy or first fruits of the power of His Spirit. But the first fruits, though precious, are not the full maturity, the richness, variety, and excellence of the fruits. These first organs, so full of life, however great the potential virtue they possessed, are far removed from the perfect organism with all its power actualized, manifested, diversified in the prodigious variety of functions which we now see and which will be seen even better at the end of time when the leafy tree of life shall have finished giving forth earthly fruits and will flower for all eternity.[78] There is nothing in this

[78] Heb. 13:8.

[76] Matt. 28:20.

[77] Eph. 2:20; 3:5.

[78] In spite of the fact that the present economy must endure forever, it is the opinion of St. Thomas that the status of the new law will vary according to place, time, and persons as the grace of the Holy Ghost is possessed more perfectly. He then states the principle that a thing is more perfect as it is closer to its ultimate end. (Cf. la Ilae, q. 106, a.4.) From this it is deduced that, as the body of the Church approaches its ultimate end, *donec occurramus omnes in virum perfectum* (Eph. 4:13), so much the more perfect will it be in all things, though under the same law of grace. That is why, in spite of having received the plenitude of the Spirit of sanctification on Pentecost, it receives it anew when it gives solemn testimony of the Savior (Acts 4:31) and it has always been receiving it in an invisible manner. Therefore the sovereign Spirit dwells in it to teach and sanctify it (St. Thomas, *In I Cor. 12,* lect. 2) and to direct it ceaselessly along the paths of truth and goodness, pouring forth on it new torrents of graces in the diversity of its members. Therefore the Church puts this prayer in the mouths of her ministers: "Almighty

tree which was not there virtually contained in the seed. But to grow and fructify so greatly it had to assimilate many things and absorb and vivify them.

Little by little the divine ferment pervades the mass of humanity and transforms it into itself, and this deifying fermentation must be ever increasing. He who knows how to make sons of Abraham out of stones is continually dragging them forth out of the human quarry and shaping them, making them polished and perfect in order to place them in the tower of the kingdom where they will shine for all eternity in perfect sanctity and justice. Until this happens, the Church will ever increase and progress, strictly-speaking even more than did Jesus, in wisdom and age and grace before God and men. He Himself will direct our feet along the paths of peace, of holiness, and of perfection.[79] In these paths we shall have no other norm, no other light, and no other power but that of the divine Master who is the way, the truth, and the life. No fixed limit will be set to our progress other than the perfection of the heavenly Father incarnate in that Exemplar who is the splendor of His glory and the figure of His substance, whose glory we saw was that of the Only-begotten, full of grace and truth and of whose plenitude we shall all receive, until the perfection of the saints is consummated in the works of their ministry and the entire body is well organized or edified in charity.

Although the sanctity of the apostles, who were the foundation stones of the Church, will never be surpassed by anyone, the sanctity of the whole mystical body does not on that account cease to increase unceasingly, as it is developed and perfected in its en-

and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and ruled: mercifully hearken to our supplications for all orders therein, that by the gift of Thy grace, all in their several stations may give Thee faithful service" (For all the ranks in the Church).

It will perhaps be objected, "Who has ever loved Christ as did the twelve apostles, the early martyrs, and the virgins of the primitive Church? Where can one see that halo of primitive Christianity when the faithful had but one heart and one soul and lived in a kind of ecstasy, the ecstasy of love in its first hour?"

"It is true," replies Bougaud *(L'Eglise,* p. 231), "that this beginning is ineffable, as is every beginning of love. But I hear Renan say: 'Jesus Christ is loved a thousand times more today than when He lived'; and I hear Havet repeat: 'Never was Jesus loved as He is loved today.' There is, then, a certain progress in the love of Jesus Christ and of souls, and evidently that progress must be true, if such blind men were able to notice it."

[79] Luke 1:73-79.

tirety. For, as we have said, in this integral progress the Church militant forms one body with the Church triumphant, and the new saints are added to the communion of the old. For each member or each anatomical element which is transfigured or made glorious, we see appear again two or more who come to take their place in the yet passible organism and there to fulfill their functions with greater variety and perfection, thus dividing the physiological labor. And the vital activity which is manifested by that continual and progressive specialization and division of functions is much greater and fuller than that which one alone could manifest, however centrally situated he might be. Thus the vital actuality and true sanctity cannot but increase more and more in the Church as there is an advance in differentiation, specialization, and the consequent organic and physiological progress.

For that reason St. Hildegard sees how that marvelous body of the Church has yet to be fully developed, perfected, completed, purified, and sanctified until the end of time. "She has not yet reached," St. Hildegard writes, "the full power of her constitution nor the full brilliance of her splendor, for during the time of the son of perdition who will bring error into the world, she will suffer the fiery and bloody agony of most cruel perversity in all her members and, having been led to perfection through that calamity with bleeding wounds, she will be near the heavenly Jerusalem." [80]

Father Hoyos also saw in spirit those happy times when all the prophecies would be fulfilled and all nations would serve God. On another occasion he was given to understand how, by means of the new devotions which are ever springing forth in the Church, the Savior discloses to us new treasures of His goodness and new perfections which we should copy in ourselves in order to become more like Him and to arrive at a perfection similar to that of the blessed. So he states how our Lord manifested to him the glory that those souls would have through knowing and loving the affections and movements of His sacred heart which He manifests to the Church so that the faithful may fashion their hearts in the likeness of His. Thus many souls will learn from this divine heart a perfection which is much higher in love and suffering.

[80] *Scivias,* II, 3.

In conformity with this, St. Vincent Ferrer[81] announced that the time would come when a great multitude of Christians would have no other words or tastes or affections but those of Jesus Christ. And in more recent times, Ven. Anna Maria Taigi, whom Pope Pius IX called a providential woman, prophesied that the time was not far distant when there would be a marvelous increase in the Church.[82]*Thus is sanctity ever increasing because charity cannot remain idle.

Abbot Perreive observes: "Love cannot live unless it grows. It must grow; it must rise; it must be strengthened through joy and suffering, it must be firmly rooted for its well-being and ever more firmly established through trials and sacrifices. In a word, it must always progress and advance and at each step be increased in the grandeur of its conquests and its gifts."

The love of the Spouse for Jesus Christ is always increasing and ever seeking new ways to please the Beloved. It will always be offering Him new flowers of virtue and sanctity, without depreciating the old ones. Why should there not be saints as great as or even greater than in other times, when the general progress of the Church (especially in regard to sacramental discipline and theology, a better knowledge of ascetical and mystical theology and the whole progress of the spiritual life) has facilitated and multipled the means of sanctification? Now as always God is sharing with souls His intimate friendship and in the great facility which He gives them to purify themselves frequently in the sacrament of penance and to replenish and nourish themselves by daily Communion, He offers them efficacious means for arriving promptly at the heights of sanctity, if they wish to correspond with the inventions of His love and not be deaf to His sweet calling. Let us learn how to correspond with love and generosity, and He will be able to work in us His unheard-of marvels. His treasures are never exhausted, and

81 *Vitae Spirit.,* 19.

82 St. Hildegard, Letter 94: "After this effeminate epoch there will come manly times. Then great combats will be waged. Men will not be like little children, as they are now, thinking only of pastimes and pleasures. They will be vigorous men. The fear of God and severe discipline will reign again, and many lay-people will live like saints. That desire for sanctity will last a long time. The clergy will be a model of virtue. Health, vigor, and fortitude will reign in the people of God to such an extent that numerous martyrs will be seen."

from them there are always proceeding new prodigies with which He continually renews His Church.[83]

In this regard, Caussade says:

O unknown Love! it seems as if Your wonders were finished and nothing remained but to copy Your ancient works, and to quote Your past discourses! And no one sees that Your inexhaustible activity is a source of new thoughts, of fresh sufferings and further actions: of new Patriarchs, Apostles, Prophets, and Saints who have no need to copy the lives and writings of the others, but only to live in perpetual abandonment to your secret operations. We hear of nothing on all sides but "the first centuries," "the time of the Saints." What a strange way of talking! Is not all time a succession of the effects of the divine operation, working at every instant, filling, sanctifying, and supernaturalising them all? Has there ever been an ancient method of abandonment to this operation which is now out of season? Had the Saints of the first ages any other secret than that of becoming from moment to moment whatever the divine power willed to make them? And will this power cease to pour forth its glory on the souls which abandon themselves to it without reserve? . . . Not by consulting Your former works shall I become what You would have me to be; but by receiving You in everything. By that ancient road, the only royal road, the road of our fathers shall I be enlightened, and shall speak as they spoke. It is thus that I would imitate them all, quote them all, copy them all.

This is how the spiritual house of God will be built. No other foundation is needed than the one set down by Him: Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the prophets. On this foundation we must all build in order to complete and perfect the edifice as far as lies in us. But we must look well how we build, for the works of each one will be tested by fire. Only those materials that can withstand this test[88]

[88] "I dwelt in the apostles," said the divine Paraclete to Blessed Angela of Foligno (*Visions,* chap. 20), "and they did not experience My presence in the way that you do. Enter into yourself and you will find a joy without any comparison. It will not be the sound of My voice in your soul; it will be Myself. . . . I love with an immense love the soul that loves Me without any simulation. If I find a soul possessing perfect love, I will bestow on it even greater graces there than on the saints of centuries past. . . . God does not ask anything of the soul but love, and the soul's love is God Himself." "Ponder these last words," adds Blessed Angela, "weigh them well; they are profound. . . . My soul understood with certainty that in Him there is nothing but love. He complained that now He finds so few in whom to deposit His grace, and He promised to give to His new friends, if He finds them, greater graces than He gave to the ancients."

by fire will be able to remain. The fire of tribulations in this life continually purifies the work, and only that will remain for all eternity which cannot be destroyed by the fires of purgatory but will rather thereby obtain new glory.[84] Therefore, during this earthly existence the spiritual edifice is continually increasing not only in grandeur and magnificence, but also in splendors of virtue and sanctity.

Here alone is the reason for our passing existence. The Church still remains and withstands all persecutions because it must progress and be perfected completely and especially in sanctity. For that did Jesus Christ establish His Church "that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the world of life: that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish."[85] It is true that this will not be attained until glory; but in order that all may be reunited there, it is necessary that the Church finish her course,[86] that the number and perfection of all her members be completed, that all should be transformed in the same divine image from glory to glory;[87] and that all should be sanctified,[88] so that in all of them she may be healthy, purified, and sanctified. We see how as yet there are many members in this mystical body who are infirm and weak and almost dead.[89]

It appears that much is yet lacking for the complete fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the general effusion of the gifts of the Spirit as announced by Joel, which began to be fulfilled in the Cenacle; for the arrival at their plenitude of the communications of the Holy Ghost and the reign of perfect justice, so that vision and prophecy may be fulfilled and eternal justice may be established, as Daniel says, when all the kings of the earth will adore Him and all nations will serve Him,[90] and that peace and sanctity may reign in all parts according to the magnificent prophecies of Isaias.

But first of all it will be necessary to effect the congregation

84 I Cor. 3:10-15.
85 Eph. 5:26 f.
88 II Tim. 4:7.
8TII Cor. 3:18.
881 John 3:3.
89 I Cor. 11:30.
90 Ps. 71:11.

of Israel, and then all nations will be gathered together to serve the Lord. Today, instead of that unanimous adoration, we are presented rather with a general apostasy. We see reason filled with pride, raising itself up and opposing all that is from God.[91] But in spite of the persecutions and apostasies, the number of Catholics continues to grow. The frequenting of the sacraments and the fervor of many souls is a consolation in the midst of so many defections.

In spite of all this, the mystical tower continues to rise steadily. When its construction is completed, this world will no longer have a purpose for existing; it will be the general consummation. The faithful servants will be placed in charge of the goods of the Savior; the virgins who are ready with the oil of charity will enter with the Spouse into the eternal nuptials; but the careless and those who were not prepared will be left outside. They will be cast into the exterior darkness.

Our enemies persecute us with increasing fury. Thinking that they do us injury, they do nothing but work, without realizing it, for the construction of the house of God. They contribute to the burnishing and polishing of the useful stones and cause the useless ones to crack and be cast out. If they render useless the stones of one nation, they thus arouse the zeal of the evangelical workers to go to far-off places to find even better stones. If some nations are rendered unworthy of the kingdom of God, it will be taken from them and given to another nation that will bring forth fruit.[92] A terrible truth for many nations in Europe!

Frequently God castigates His people by the hands of the enemy, and those castigated and corrected are much beloved children who enter into the glory of God the Father while the persecutors will be the "rods of indignation" which afterward are good for nothing but the fire.[93] Tbe blood of the martyrs is ever seeking vengeance, but it must wait until the number of their brethren will be complete.[94] Then will appear the sign of the Son of man who will come to renew all things and to give each one His just merits.

Thus will be made known the false progress so much boasted of

91 II Thess. 2:3-11.
92 Matt. 21:43.
93 Isa. 10:5-27.
94 Apoc. 6:10 f.

by reason which, not recognizing anything above itself, closes its eyes before the center of light and life, Jesus Christ, our Savior, in whom is the perfection and consummation of all things. Then, seeing the just souls reigning with Him, it will cry out with the impious: "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us." [95]

Today those who are insensate in the eyes of the world are growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior.[98] They taste and see how sw'eet He is and they can say with all confidence: "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth not us, because it knew not Him. Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone that hath this hope in Him, sanctifieth himself, as He also is holy."[97]

Let us sanctify ourselves in truth by following faithfully the motions and inspirations of the loving Spirit of adoption and sanctification. Thus shall we contribute efficaciously to the edification of the holy Church, growing in all manner of perfections, according to Jesus Christ, our Head, from whom the whole body receives, by joints and bands, the necessary nourishment to grow unto the increase of God.[98]

[95] Wisd. 5:4-6.
[86]II Pet. 3:18.
[87]I John 3:1-3.
[88] Col. 2:19.

Index

Abandonment of self, II, 30, 52, 97
Abandonment of soul by God, I, 247; II, 37, 198 ff., 211-13
Abandonment of soul to God, II, 45
Abnegation; *see* Mortification
Active life and contemplation, II, 392
Activity, divine: our participation in, I, '95 ff.
Activity, quasi-divine, II, 230-37
Adolescence, spiritual, I, 21, 269
Adoption, divine
  characteristics of, I, 86
  essence of eternal life, I, 135
  fruits of, I, 137
  and justification, I, 86 ff.
  obligations proceeding from, I, 103
  reality of, I, 26-28, 44, 137, 348
  role of divine persons in, I, 144 ff.
Amendment of life, I, 307
Angels, role of the, I, 106
Annihilation; *see* Humility
Appropriation; *see* Attribution
Artifices of divine love, II, 45
Asceticism, I, 270; II, 422: and mysticism, I, 17-19, 256; II, 403-33
Ascetics: activity of, I, 19; II, 87; reason for, II, 87; as a science, I, 17; II, 404; their mode of prayer, I, 17
Aspirations, I, 302
Attributions: ordinary and proper, I, 141 ff.
Awareness of God: in divine indwelling, I, 241-43; II, 33, 37, 71, 136-38, 144, 164 ff., 2i9ff.; through gifts, I, 21; II, 135, 340 ff.; through grace, I, 24 note 22

Baptism: importance of, I, 319; as rebirth, I, 102; role of Holy Ghost in, I, >78
Beatitudes, I, 202
  the clean of heart, I, 280
  and fruits, I, 276 ff.
  the meek, I, 280
  the merciful, I, 280
  merited *de condigno,* I, 278
  the peacemakers, I, 279
  the poor in spirit, I, 280
  and religious vows, I, 312
  those who hunger and thirst after justice, I, 279
  those who mourn, I, 279
  those who suffer persecution, I, 281
Beauty of just soul, I, 46, 89, 115-17
Betrothal; *see* Espousal
Bilocation, II, 293
Blessed Virgin: devotion to, I, 326; and Holy Eucharist, I, 337 f.; predestination of, I, 106
Blood, precious: power of, I, 345

Ceaseless struggles, II, 120
Charity
  and communication with God, I, 140
  definition of, I, 205
  degree of; in souls on earth, I, 122, 208
  Gardeil on, I, 208 note 39
  increased through Eucharist, I, 338
  source of merit, I, 293
  stability after death, I, 130
Christ:
  configuration with, II, 285-87, 367-69
  as cornerstone, I, 156
  as good shepherd, I, 155
  as head of mystical body, I, 80 ff.; *ijj.* 60
  incorporation in, I, 48 ff., 102-4: obligations based on, 1, 104
  as key to supernatural order, I, 50 ||
  as *Lumen gloriae,* I, 126
  as our brother, I, 151-55

Christ *(continued)*
our death in, I, 102
as our model, I, 60
our rebirth in, I, 62 ff., 75 ff-, 146
as spouse of souls, I, 156, 160-69, 171-73
Church, the *(see* also Mystical body)
as bride of Christ, I, 157
diversity of functions in, II, 454, 457-64
evolution of, II, 469-90
ideals proposed by, I, 98
increasing sanctity in, II, 504-8
inner life of, I, 1
living temple of God, II, 491-98
love for, II, 491
mutual relation of members in, II, 457-65, 475-90
as an organism, I, 267 ff.; II, 447
perfection of members in, II, 454, 474
progress in, II, 469-71, 474, 477
progressive perfection of, II, 455
retrogression in, II, 471-73
Sabatier on, I, 99
sanctification of, II, 499-510
symbols of, I, 11-13; II, 492
vital life of, II, 448-56
vital organism of, II, 457-64, 474
Cleavage of soul and spirit, II, 215
Communications, intimate, II, 240
Communion: effects of, I, 338 ff., 344; frequent, I, 341, 343; of saints, II, 488; spiritual, I, 323
Compendium of the spiritual life, II, 48
Confessor, knowledge requisite in, I, 324
Configuration with Christ, II, 285-87
Confirmation, sacrament of, I, 320
Confirmation in grace, II, 228-30
Conforming union, II, 147-57
Conscience, II, 24
Consolations: desire for, II, txt; in night of senses, II, 139 ff.; 209-u
Constancy in trials, II, 98 ff.
Contemplation
acquired, I, 17; II, 128
and active life, II, 134, 145
aids to, I, 284
and apostolic life, II, 392
dark and purifying, II, 216-19
dawn of, II, 95-126
desire for, II, 384-403
grades of, II, 256-62
infused, II, 127 ff.
in mystics, I, 17
obstacles to, I, 284
Contemplation *(continued)*
passivity of, I, 243 ff.
phenomena accompanying, II, 262-88
possible for all, II, 438-42
prelude to, II, 95-100
prerequisites for, II, 393-403
St. John of the Cross on, I, 249 ff.
signs of call to, II, 100-102
source of action, II, 230-37
true, II, 141
Contemplatives
and ascetics, II, 87
definition of, I, 17
glorify God, II, 249-51
power of, II, 230-37
Contradictions, II, 104-8
Conversations, pious, I, 313
Cowardly, the, II, 83 ff.
Crisis, II, 76 ff., 83 ff.
Cross, the way of the, II, 59 ff.
Crosses: made light, II, 125; the pledge of love, II, 125; and trials, II, 19 ff., 22, 30, 72-78, 104-12

Deafness, spiritual, II, 433-37
Death: longings for, I, 139; II, 156; mystic, II, 287-89
Degrees of union, II, 155 ff., 175 ff-» 2,9“ 39
Deification
Bainvel on, I, 352
Bellamy on, I, 37
and eternal glory, I, 121
by Holy Ghost, I, 23
Meric on, I, 357
and nature, I, 57
notions of the Fathers on, I, 29 ff.
Passaglia on, I, 37
process of, II, 3 ff.
progress of, II, 5 ff., 16 ff., 31 ff., 95 ff., 127 ff., 171 ff., 2I9ff.
Ramière on, I, 38
role of divine persons in, I, 144 ff.
role of Holy Ghost in, I, 30-33
role of Word in, I, 33
St. Augustine on, I, 36 note 61
St. Cyril on, I, 35 note 59
St. Dionysius on, I, 65
St. John Chrysostom on, I, 34 note 57, 56
St. Peter Chrysologus on, I, 33
St. Thomas on, I, 30 note 39
and Son of God, I, 33
status of this doctrine today, I, 38-40
and union with God, I, 54 if·, 143, 353

Derision, II, 104-8
Devotions, routine, I, 305
Dignity: of Christians, I, 28; of consecrated virgins, I, 169-71
Directors, spiritual
attitude of souls toward, I, 311
function of, II, 486
incompetent, II, 82, 89 ff., 383
lack of, I, 3
necessity of, I, 308; II, 76, 82
need of, II, 258
need mystical theology, II, 360
qualifications of, I, 309-12
reasons for incompetent, II, 415 ff.
rules for, I, 24411., 316-18
St. John of the Cross on, I, 316 ff.
Dogma and true progress, I, 98-102
Dryness, spiritual, II, 98-100

Ecstasy, II, 264, 275; natural and supernatural, II, 289-95, 301
Ecstatic union, II, 157-62, 165-67
Ejaculations, I, 302
Epiphenomena, II, 304 ff.
Espousal of Christ with just souls, I, 162 ff., 171-73; II, 170-75, 180, 189 ff.
Espousal, the mystic: works preceding, II, 205-7
Eucharist, Holy
cause of union and transformation, I, 329 ff.
center of mystical life, II, 116
food of the soul, I, 328
fruits of, I, 338-42
function of, I, 319
importance of, I, 297, 319, 321-23, 328 ff.
marvels of, I, 344
and mystical marriage, I, 333
reception of, I, 343
as source of blessings, I, 344
and union with Father, Holy Ghost, and Blessed Virgin, I, 335-38
Evolution, mystical: definition of, I, 2, 16; importance of study of, I, 3 ff.; marvels of, I, 28; true, II, 381
Examination of conscience: and confession, I, 324; general, I, 307; particular, I, 307
Exchange of hearts, II, 181
Experience of divinity, II, 353 ff.
Expiatory ministry, II, 467, 473
Extreme unction, I, 320

Faith
definition of, I, 205
and the gifts, I, 120
and good works, I, 98, roi
growth of, I, 130
guidance of, II, 96
and knowledge of God, I, 140, 205, 354
loss of, I, 204
necessity of, I, 206
unformed, I, 198, 206
virtue of; and glory, I, 79, 206
Falsely devout, II, 31
Fasting, merit of, I, 285
Father (God): divine paternity of, I, ■J0-?2; °ur generation by, I, 147; union with, through the Eucharist, I. 336
Fathers (Church): on deification, I, 29 ff.; on grace, I, 82 ff.
Fault, dominant, I, 307
Fervor, sensible, I, 270
Few chosen, II, 93
Few that persevere, II, 78 ff., 83-87, 94
Filiation: natural and adoptive, I, 84; *see also* Adoption
Fire of love, II, 132 ff.
Flight of spirit, II, 264(1.
Folly of divine love, II, 45, **i11,** i39ff., 149, 151 ff., 162-65
Folly of the cross, II, 25 ff.
Fomes peccati, I, 93
Fortitude: acquired and infused, I, 212; definition of, I, 206, 209, 303; gift of *(see* Gifts of Holy Ghost)
Friendship, divine, I, 132-35, 184, 351, 354
Friendship: with God, I, 45, 140; with persons of the Trinity, I, 59, 186, 350
Friendships, holy, I, 313
Fruits of Holy Ghost, I, 202, 273 ff.; II, 315: and beatitudes and gifts, I, 276 ff.; enumeration of, I, 274, 279

Gifts of Holy Ghost
in ascetics, I, 20; II, 405
chained, II, 434-36
compared with fruits and beatitudes, I, 276 ff.
compared with virtues, I, 216-20, 226
constituents in mystical life, II, 425
contemplation and, II, 402
counsel, I, 21, 233, 258, 263, 280; II, 429, 433

Gifts of Holy Ghost *(continued)*
excellence of, I, 231, 263-67
exercise of, II, 429
existence in just souls, I, 228; II, 425 ff.
fear, II, 429, 433
fear of the Lord, 1, 261, 279
fortitude, I, 234, 258, 262, 280; II, 429, 433
Froget on, I, 226
function of, I, 115, 200
Gardeil on, I, 201 note 28, 230 note 23, 234, 239
importance and nature of, I, 201 ff., 229-32
knowledge, I, 21, 205, 258 ff., 262, 279; II, 430, 433
manifestation of, I, 261-63
Mary Agreda on, I, 227
mode of operation, I, 232-36
mystical body and, I, 296
mystical life and, I, 220 ff.; II, 425®.
necessity of, I, 224-28
piety, I, 260, 262, 279; II, 429, 433
in the saints, I, 236-38
special work of each, I, 257 ff.
spiritual senses and, II, 340-52
understanding, I, 21, 140, 205, 232, 257, 263, 280, 355; II, 364, 386, 430, 433
why they do not fructify, I, 284
wisdom, I, 21, 140, 142, 205, 257, 263, 280, 355; II, 364, 386, 425 note, 430, 433
Glory: grace and life of, 24, 131; and virtues of faith and hope, I, 79
God: personal distinctions in, I, 59; presence in just soul, I, 108; simplicity of, I, 58
Grace
abuse of, II, 491
actual, I, 49
assurance of being in, I, 217
Bellamy on, I, 76
confirmation in, II, 228-30
Council of Trent on, I, 292
definition of, I, 67, 81
and divine indwelling, I, 107 ff.
as divine life, I, 41 ff., 49
elevating, I, 62
Fathers of Church on, I, 82
Froget on justification through, I, 69
Gay on, I, 203
and glory, I, 24, 119 ff.
increase of, I, 46
infinite value of, I, 24-26
life of, I, 347 ff.
Grace *(continued)*
loss of, I, 26
and nature, I, 71 ff.
nature perfected by, I, 199
operation of, I, 115, 195-97
power of, I, 25, 90-93
Protestant teaching on, I, 74, 75 note 27
St. Thomas on, I, 68 note 3
sanctifying, I, 67 f.: effects of, I, 68-71
source of merit, I, 293
stability after death, I, 130
and works *ad intra,* I, 140
Graces *gratis datae,* I, 115; II, 304-33
Growth, spiritual
in grace, I, 195 ff., 291; Council of Trent on, I, 292
of individual soul, I, 294
as members of mystical body, I, 295-98
and merit, I, 290-94
necessity of, I, 289
sacraments and, I, 295 ff.
Terrien on, I, 289
virtues and gifts and, I, 294

Happiness on earth and in heaven, I, 121-24
Heart, purity of, II, 65 ff.
Hearts, exchange of, II, 181
Heretics, separated from Christ, II, 451
Holy Ghost
Bellamy on participation in, I, 85
communication of, I, 79 ff.
cooperation with, I, 284 ff.
and deification, I, 30-33, 50: St. Basil on, I, 35 note 6t
direction by, I, 219, 249 ff.: Lallemant on, I, 252 ff., 270
as dispenser of grace, I, 80
docility to, II, 14, 22, 32, 34, 51, 60, 63, 83, 95, 221, 260, 390, 412 ff.
and Eucharist, I, 336
as fount of living water, I, 175
as gift of God, I, 175
gifts of; *see* Gifts of Holy Ghost
influence on Christ and faithful, I, 181-87
inspiration of, I, 239: Caussade on, I, 254 ff.
marvelous works of, I, 187-94
mission or giving of, I, 111 ff.
as mystical unction, I, 180
participation in, I, 85

Holy Ghost *(continued)*
pledge of the, II, 146
relations with just souls, I, 173 ff.
role in baptism, I, 178
as source of sanctity, I, 176-80; II, 13, 17, 162
as spirit of adoption, I, 146, 180
as spirit of love, I, 173-75; B2-35» 146
Terrien on, I, 181
vivifying action of, I, 109-11
working in souls, I, 281 ff., 284-88
Holy Ghost, indwelling of, I, 36, 106 ff., 111-13, 148 ff., 182
Froget on, I, 36
Gardeil on, I, 113 note 34, 132, 218
Gay on, I, 85
and grace, I, 107
obligations resulting from, I, 103
St. John of the Cross on, I, 220 note *66*
Sauvé on, I, 107 note 2
teaching of Fathers, I, 37 note 63
Holy orders, I, 296, 320
Hope: definition of, I, 205; and glory, I, 79; loss of, I, 204; necessity of, II, 83 f.; unformed, I, 198
Humility, I, 306: basis of sanctity, II, 50 ff., 61

Illumination, II, 30-44, 65 ff., 129 ff.
Illuminative way, II, 406-12 and *passim*
Image of God in us, I, 60 ff.
Imperfections in beginners, II, 28
Incarnation, I, 105 ff.: influence of Holy Ghost in, I, 187; necessity of, I, 97, 105; Sauvé on, I, 97 note 45
Indwelling, divine *(see also* Holy Ghost *and* Trinity), I, 72: awareness of, I, 241-43; and charity, I, 134; St. Teresa on, I, 117 ff.; Weiss on, I, 114 note 38
Infancy, spiritual, I, 20, 269 ff., 272
Infused recollection, II, 35
Intimate communications, II, 240

Joy in suffering, II, 43
Justice: acquired and infused virtue of, I, 212; definition of, I, 105; falsity of imputed, I, 93 f.
Justification
and adoption, I, 86 ff.
Council of Trent on, I, 94
Froget on, I, 69
greatness of, I, 26
by the Holy Ghost, I, 23
Justification *(continued)*
Protestant teaching on, I, 93
as renewal and growth, I, 94-97
and sanctification, I, 90 ff.

Knowledge, infused, II, 361 ff.
Knowledge of God: through faith and gifts, I, 130, 140; natural, I, 61; speculative and experimental, I, 134; supernatural, I, 119, 137, 354

Life
divine: in itself and in us, I, 58-60
eternal, I, 24, 120
excellence of contemplative, I, 304
of grace, I, 1, 347 ff.: Gardeil on, I, 131
of grace and glory, I, 24, 132 ff., 137
mystical: and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, I, 220 ff.; general idea of, I, 16, 18 note 8
of soul in spiritual marriage, II, 243-46
Life, supernatural
concept of, I, 42 ff., 347
elements of, I, 42
in essence and by participation, I, 58
and the Eucharist, I, 323
as kingdom of God on earth, I, 135 ff.
nature, function, and growth of, I, i30ff., 353 ff.
participation in divine life, I, 43-45
relations flowing from, I, 103
Little ones preferred, II, 437
Little things, fidelity in, II, 24
Locutions, II, 305-33
Love
artifices of divine, II, 45, in, 139ff., 149, 151 ff., 162-65
crosses made light by, II, 125
disinterested, II, 19, 167
fire of, II, 132 ff.
folly of divine, II, 45, in, 139 ff., 149, 151 ff., 162-65
sw'oons of, II, 275
wounding and transforming, II, 276-85
Love of God: in glory, I, 135; Hugueny on, I, 138 f.; in natural state, I, 61; supernatural, I, 119, 137, 353
Loving gaze, a mystic sleep, II, 122
Lukewarmness, II, 80, 84
Lumen gloriae, I, i24ff.

Man: the new, II, 5; the old, II, 5
Marriage: Eucharist and the mystical, I, 329-35; the spiritual, II, 219-39, 246

Mary; *tee* Blessed Virgin
Matrimony: sacrament of, I, 297, 320; spiritual *(see* Marriage)
Maturity, spiritual, I, 21, 270
Meditation, laborious activity of, I, 243 ff.
Merit, I, 290-94: and good works, I, 123; sources of, I, 293
Mortification
advantages of, II, 62
constancy in, II, 27
exterior, II, 54
fruits of, II, 58 ff.
interior, II, 55
necessity of, I, 306; II, 5 ff., 53 if., 410
need for guidance in, I, 307
and renewal, II, 5-16
Mystic death and resurrection, II, 287-89
Mystic espousal, the, II, 170-75, 180, i8çff.: works preceding, II, 205-7
Mystic seal, II, 285-87
Mystical: meaning of term, I, 16; state, I. 270. 355
Mystical body
Christ acting in, II, 450, 456
Christ as head of, I, 157-60; II, 448, 5°3
Christ perfected in, II, 448, 453
diversity of elements and functions in, II, 457-60, 477-85
growth in sanctity of, II, 499-510
growth of, I, 295-98; II, 469-75
influence of Holy Ghost on, I, 187
mutual relation of members, II, 475-90
obligations of members of, I, 104; II, 449. 454- 46‘..474
spiritual transition of members of, I, 267 ff.
unworthy members in, II, 471, 481 ff.
a vital organism, II, 447-65
Mystical phenomena, II, 40 ff.
Mystical quietude, II, 144-46
Mystical sleep, II, 103, 122
Mystical theology, contempt for, II, 360
Mystical union, desire for, II, 384-403, 419-21
Mysticism: and asceticism, I, 17-19, 256; II, 403-21; and asceticism compared, II, 421-33; definition of, I, 17; II, 403; true characteristics of, II, 430
Mystics: definition of, I, 17; language of, I, 45, 48, 355
Night of the senses, I, 22, 222, 272; II, 95-104: sufferings in, II, 208
Night of the spirit, I, 22, 223; II, 183-204
Obedience, Lallemant on divine inspiration and, I, 238 note 117
Office, the Divine, I, 325
Operations, divine: *ad extra,* I, 140; *ad intra,* I, 140
Original sin; *see* Sin
Passion, fruits of the, II, 490
Passive purification, II, 63 ff., 95-112, 175-204
Peace of sons of God, II, 70 ff.
Penance
practice of; *see* Mortification
sacrament of: function of, I, 63, 92, 297, 320; importance of, 323-25
virtue of, I, 307, 324
Perfect souls, habitual state of, II, 241-43
Perfect union and disinterested love, II, 167-69
Perfection: and exterior works, I, 303 ff.; of members in Church, II, 450, 454; obligation to strive after, I, 291 note 14; rules of, I, 314-16
Perseverance, II, 123-25
Phenomena: accompanying contemplation, II, 262-88; natural and supernatural, II, 289-95, 301-2; in our day, II, 296-303
Philosophy, and knowledge of God, I, 57. 65
Pledge of love, II, 125
Pneumatic psychology; *see* Psychology
Possession, diabolical, I, 240
Potencies, supernatural, I, 47, 49, 197 ff.
Prayer
of ascetics, I, 17
continual, II, 45
grades of, II, 262-74, 442-44
mental, I, 300
and mystical life, II, 119
of mystics, I, 17
necessity of, I, 300, 302; II, 76 ff., 259
perfect, II, 118
qualities of, I, 301
of quiet, II, 131-42, 144-46, 263, 271
of recollection, I, 118; II, 127-30, 142-44, 262, 271
of simplicity, I, 17; II, 122
strength in trials, II, 113-18
unconscious, II, 45
of union, II, 147-62, 264-74
vocal, I, 301

Preaching, ministry of, I, 313
Presence of God in just soul, I, 108, 117-'9
Presence of Trinity; *see* Trinity
Process of renewal and deification, II, 3ff.
Progress, meaning of, II, 5 ff.
Progressive revelations, II, 353-69
Progressive transformation, II, 221
Prudence: acquired and infused, I, 212; definition of, I, 205, 209; of the flesh, I, 21; human, II, 91; of the spirit, I, 21
Psychology, pneumatic, I, 238 ff.: and organism of the Church, I, 267-73
Purgation: fruits of active, II, 58 ff.; passive, II, 63 ff.
Purgations, II, 175-80, 185 ff., 205-15: necessity of, II, 259; passive, II, 63 ff.
Purgative way, the, II, 50 ff., 406-12
Purgatory on earth, II, 185 ff.
Purification: and mortification, II, 50-60; necessity of, 1, 91 ; II, 7 ff.; passive, II, 63 ff., 95-112, 175-204; progressive, II, 16 ff., 31 ff., 108 ff.
Purity: exterior, I, 306; interior, I, 306
Purity of heart, II, 65 ff.

Quiet, prayer of, II, 151-42, 144-46, 263, 271

Rapture, II, 264, 354
Reading, spiritual, I, 314
Reason, insufficiency of, II, 381
Recollection: infused, II, 35; prayer of, II, 127-30, 142-44, 262, 271 *(see also* Prayer)
Recollection in God, I, 299
Religion (virtue), I, 303
Renewal: and mortification, II, 5 ff.; and transformation, I, 22
Reparation, necessity of, I, 104
Resurrection, mystic death and, II, 287-89
Revelation: spirit of, II, 334-52; and union with God, I, 57
Revelations: private, II, 374-82; progressive, II, 353-69
Restoration and elevation, I, 62-64

Sacramentals, I, 325
Sacraments: functions of, I, 296 ff.; and spiritual growth, I, 49; 318 ff.
Saints: devotion to, I, 326; rare discretion of, I, 236 ff.
Sanctification and justification, I, 90 ff.
Sanctity: growth in, II, 499-510; secret of, II, 23, 48
Satisfaction for sin, I, 307
Schismatics, separated from Christ, II, 45«
Science of the saints, II, 15
Seal, mystic, II, 285-87
Secret: of progress, II, 46 ff.; of sanctity, II, 23, 48
Selection, gratuitous, II, 87-89
Senses, supernatural, II, 334-52
Silence, spiritual, II, 103, 122
Simplicity, prayer of; *see* Prayer
Sin: effects of actual, I, 92; effects of original, I, 62; and Incarnation, I, 105; reparation and satisfaction for, I, 104, 307
Sleep, mystical, II, 103, 122
Sleep of faithful soul, II, 45
Sloth, enemy of progress, II, 260
Son of God (Word) and deification, I, 33
Sons of God; *see* Adoption
Soul and spirit, cleavage of, II, 215
Species, infused, II, 362 ff.
Spirit, night of the, II, 183-204
Spirit, wounds of the, II, 181
Spiritual marriage, the, II, 219-39: conditions and signs of, II, 246; life of soul in, II, 243-46
Struggles, interior, II, 108-12
Suffering: joy in, II, 43; necessity of, I, 64; of saints on earth, I, 122
Sufferings, II, 19 ff., 30, 59, 72 ff., 175-80, 185 ff., 205-13, 367 ff., 372, 461-64, 467, 473
Supernatural order: Bainvel on, I, 54-57; harmony with natural order, I, 54 ff., 349; meaning of, I, 43
Symbols of the Church, I, n-13, 48

Temperance: acquired and infused, I, 213; definition of, I, 205, 209, 303
Temptations, II, 19 ff., 32 ff., 104-12, 208
Tepidity, II, 80, 84
Theology, mystical: contempt for, II, 360
Theology, spiritual: definition of, I, 17 note 4, 18 note 8; importance of, I, ». 324
Three ways, the, II, 49
Touches, divine, II, 277-82
Transformation: of deified souls, I, 46; process of, II, 30-44; summit of, II, 248

Transforming union, II, 170-151
Trials, II, 19 ff., 32 ff., 72 ff., 175-80, 185 ff., 205-13: constancy in, II, 98 ff.; continual, II, 104-12; interior, II, 108-12; strength in, II, 113-18
Trinity: distinction of persons in, I, 59; indwelling of, I, 113 ff.; and our adoption, I, 147, 349; supernatural life in essence, I, 58

Union
  conforming, II, 147-57
  degrees of, II, 127, 135, 147, 155 if·, 175 ff., 219-39
  degrees of mystical, II, 35 ff.
  desire for mystical, II, 384-403, 419-21
  effects of ecstatic, II, 157-62, 165
  excellence of ecstatic, II, *166*
  Gardeil on, I, 129
  between God and soul in heaven, I, 128
  with God, I, 57: and desires for death, I, 139; and revelation, I, 57
  perfect, II, 167-69
  prayer of, II, 147-62, 264-74
  process of, II, 30-44
  transforming, II, 37, 170-251
Unitive way, II, 406-13 and *passim*

Valiant, the, II, 83 ff.
Virgins, dignity of consecrated, I, 169-7*
Virtues
  acquisition of, I, 213 ff.
  cardinal, I, 205: St. Augustine on, I, 205
  compared with gifts, I, 216-20
  difference between acquired and infused, I, 212
  infused, I, 49, 204: in ascetics, I, 19; division and number of, I, 205 ff.;
Virtues *(continued)*
  Froget on, I, 72 note 18; growth of I, 212; necessity of, I, 115, 197 ff,' 209-16; Terrien on, I, 211
  moral, I, 199, 209 ff.
  mystical body and, I, 296
  natural and supernatural, I, 199 ff.
  necessity of acquired and infused, I 115, 209-16
  necessity of growth in acquired, 1, 214
  testing of, II, 19 ff.
  theological, I, 20ó ff.: need of, I, 206
Vision, beatific, I, 124-28, 135
Vision, spiritual, II, 354-59
Vision of God, II, 363-67
Visions, II, 271, 305-33
Vows, religious, I, 312: and beatitudes, I, 312; and perfection, I, 170; renewal of, I, 169, 312

Way, ordinary and extraordinary, I, 16 ff., 19 ff.
Ways of spirit and human prudence, II, 91 ff.
Ways of the spirit, diversity of, II, 252-74
Women and divine favors, II, 298-303
Word; *see* Christ
Works, good, I, 303 ff.
  excessive attachment to, I, 305
  and grace, I, 195
  and merit, I, 292 ff., 303 ff.
  and perfection, I, 303 ff., 316
  Protestant teaching on, I, 93, 98 ff.
  Tauler on, I, 123 note 11
  value of, I, 46, 123
  Weiss on, I, 123 note 11
Works, divine: *ad extra,* I, 140; *ad intra,* 1, ·4°
Wounds of love, II, 276-85
Wounds of the spirit, II, 181

THE MYSTICAL EVOLUTION

in the Development and Vitality of the Chi'rch

By Fr. John G Arintero, O.P

There is no other book quii e like *The Mystical Evolution*. Not only does it explain in profound and intimate detail the nature of the supernatural life in all its glorious ramifications for Christians in general, but it also recites a lived and familiar lexicon of the sometimes torturous steps of the spiritual life, as the individual sees it, while progressing through the famous three ways. *The Mystical Evolution* is unique because it is thorough and because it is written by one who both knows intellectually whereof he speaks, but at the same time has experienced the subject of his writing over a long period. (In fact, Father Arintero's sanctity has led to promotion of his cause.) Unl.ke most writers of spirituality, the author quotes copiously from the Bible, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and from all the great mystics and spiritual writers of the Church, makir-* this v'rtually a mystical encyclopedia. The nic6nituae of the book is exhaustive, its discussion minutely informative, and its style common, so that anyone can understand. The spiritually oriented reader will dwell long and with rich reward in the pages and amidst the thought of Father John Arintero.

The cover art is an enlarged, impressionistic picture of the author.